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Borrowing a home: Palestinian women's agency in forming national identity

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an examination of Palestinian women's roles and agency in creating and reinforcing Palestinian national identity. This is done by interviewing approximately 30 women, as well as observing and participating in daily life amongst Palestinian refugees. Women are an important part of the preservation and continuation of specific aspects of Palestinian culture, which are passed down from one generation to the next. Traditionally in research of refugees, women's voices have been marginalized, and by drawing on stand-point feminist theory this research focuses exclusively on women's roles and women's voices in order to lessen this academic bias. The national identity of diasporic populations if formulated in a unique way due to the lack of a sovereign nation-state. It has not been until recently in academia that women have been studied in depth for their contributions to the formation of national identity among diasporic populations. Generally, in the Middle East a person's ethnic heritage is passed on through the father's lineage, but the mothers, sisters, aunts, and grandmothers, who share their stories and cultural knowledge with children directly impact how individuals grow up to view themselves as having Palestinian nationality. This project focuses on the women's role in the production, conforming, and resistance to certain aspects of the Palestinian collective narrative, through women's roles in family life, every day practices, kinship, and social and religious rituals. This project examines how women construct their identities and express themselves through these activities, and it shows how these expressions influence the Palestinian collective narrative.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Smoke curled upward into the warm, night air, as Yasmeen took a long draw on the hookah. We sat outside Yasmeen's home on the veranda, in order to enjoy the night. When she talked Yasmeen wore her emotions on her face, and would make faces sometimes, when asked a difficult question. Yasmeen told me of how Palestinians love their traditions and how traditions were a large part of their lives, "Most Palestinians, as you can say, like 90% they care for their traditions too much," (7/15/13). Yasmeen claimed that she was Palestinian, and insisted that she had no ties to Jordan, except her passport and citizenship, which she did not view as important. She was very adamant about this, "No, no, no! Not at all." Yasmeen said that it was important to her that others know that she is Palestinian, "They must know. I must show it because I am very proud of my people." To her, her Palestinian heritage was extremely important. She spoke of returning to her family's hometown in Palestine, because "Palestine is beautiful, much more beautiful than Jordan." Her views were often echoed throughout my research, and illustrate well how Palestinian women identify themselves as Palestinian, and how they relate to the Palestinian collective narrative. Her assertions that Palestine is beautiful, play into the idealized homeland of Palestine prior to the 1948 division. Yasmeen's pride and her self-identification as a Palestinian are all ways to show her Palestinian identity. This project will focus on women's relationship with the Palestinian collective narrative and the Palestinian national identity. This project will examine how women construct their identities and express themselves through activities, such as Ramadan[1] gatherings, weddings, as well as daily home life. This project will also show how these activities and expressions influence the Palestinian collective narrative. By

[1] Ramadan is a holy month based on the Islamic lunar calendar. Muslims fast from sunrise till sunset everyday of this month. These daily fasts are marked by family breakfast in the morning called suhoor, and the evening meal breaking the fast is known as Iftar. Iftars usually involve friends, neighbors, and family members, and is a much larger meal than suhoor. The last day of Ramadan is known as Eid al-Fitr.

understanding how this narrative helps create the Palestinian national identity, we must also acknowledge how the collective narrative shapes women's lives, and how Palestinian women shape the collective narrative. An understanding of this interrelationship is an important facet of Palestinian women refugees living abroad, and central to relating to their experiences.

History:

The advent of Palestinian refugees stems, originally, from the 1948 war. However, the events that led up to the first war started long before 1948. The Sykes-Picot Agreement in 1916 was an agreement between France and Great Britain on how the Ottoman Empire would be divided, provided they won World War I. It was also at this time there was a rise of Zionism, as a political movement in Europe. The rise of political Zionism led to the Balfour Declaration in 1917. The declaration was written by Lord Balfour and sent to one of the leaders of the Zionist movement, Baron of Rothschild, and stated,

> "His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country." Schneer 2010: 342.

After World War I, the Ottoman Empire was divided up by Great Britain and France, as was agreed upon in the Sykes-Picot Agreement, and it was in 1922 that Great Britain initially took over the area that was known at the time as Mandate Palestine. These divisions were recognized by the Turks who had agreed when they signed the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920. There were uprisings during this period of both Jewish immigrants and Palestinians who lived there against the British administrators. One disturbance in 1929, commonly referred to as the Western Wall Uprising, started with protests and riots because of conflicts revolving around Jews wanting to

pray at the Western Wall (Ashkenasi 1992). There were a couple of massacres, one in Safed and one in Hebron perpetrated by Palestinians against the Jewish populace in 1929 under the mistaken assertion that Jews were attacking Palestinians in Jerusalem (Ashkenasi 1992: 63-64). In retaliation, there were attacks on a hospital and mosque by Jewish settlers. These led to additional retaliation from Palestinians, and more violence shortly after (Ashkenasi 1992: 63-64). The British worked to suppress the violence, and succeeded. The British had an investigation, the Shaw Commission of Enquiry, which led to many arrests and trials of participants in the violence both Jewish and Palestinian (Ashkenasi 1992). Another uprising occurred from 1936 to 1939, this was the Arab Revolt. This was a bloody, three-year revolt led by Palestinians as part of a larger nationalist movement fighting for sovereignty from Great Britain's mandate (Morris 1999). The Arab Revolt failed, as it was crushed by British forces. Many Palestinian political leaders died, fled the country, or were imprisoned, which decimated the Palestinians' anti-British and anti-Zionist opposition (Hughes 2009). Due to a lack of established leadership, the Palestinians faced numerous hardships in organizing against the British and Zionist movements. However, after the Arab Revolt and World War II, Great Britain decided that it no longer could maintain the mandate in Palestine, and announced this decision to the United Nations. When Britain declared that it was no longer able to support Mandate Palestine, this decision was supported by the Peel Commission, which suggested in 1937 that Palestine be divided into two separate states. This resulted in United Nations Resolution 181, which gave Jews in Mandatory Palestine 55% of the land, even though they were only 30% of the total population in Palestine. It gave Arabs only 45% of the land, while they were approximately 70% of the population (Benvenisti, et al. 2007 42-51, Morris 1999: 155-169). The Zionist movement and Jews in the territory supported the resolution, while the Arabs did not (Litvak 2009). Palestine was initially

divided into two separate states of Palestine and Israel by the United Nations resolution in November 1947. Due to the contentious nature of an unfair and unwanted deal, there was resentment amongst the Non-Jewish population of Palestine, which led to a civil war, and fighting among Israel and the various neighboring Arab nations who allied with the Non-Jewish Palestinians. This war and ensuing problems are referred to by the Palestinians as al-Nakba, or "the Catastrophe". Al-Nakba, is how Palestinians refer to the tragedy of losing their land, homes, and sometimes, family in the Arab-Israeli war.

The Palestinians lost a majority of their lands and most were forced to flee Palestine, and the rest had to live in refugee camps in the Occupied Territories of West Bank and Gaza. This led to approximately 720,000 refugees, or roughly 85% of the Palestinian Arab population fleeing the war (Benvenisti, et al. 2007, Morris 1999). Maria Holt defines al-Nakba as the event that "shattered the physical community of Palestinians," (Holt 2011: 187). This was the period when the first refugees fled Palestine to other countries due to the violence and fear during the war. Approximately 720,000 Palestinians fled their land and homes to escape the war, fleeing to neighboring countries (UNRWA 2013). Many Palestinians living in exile have written and continue to write about the challenges facing Palestinians and how Palestinians feel about being refugees. The central themes when Palestinians discuss al-Nakba focus on loss, dislocation, suffering, return, and idealized imagery of Palestine, which are also part of the Palestinian collective narrative. These themes are present in the collective narrative, and will be elaborated upon in my second chapter. I define the collective narrative a group of stories about Palestine by Palestinians told to others (typically other Palestinians), passing them down through generations, which include the themes listed above.

The collective narrative helps to create a shared identity among Palestinians. The

collective narrative often takes the form of stories that are told repeatedly to other Palestinians, and in some cases, to outsiders of the community to illustrate an individual's ties to Palestine, or as a way to assert their Palestinian-ness. Julie Peteet refers to the Palestinian collective narrative as being "informed by sources external to the community (repression and alienation) and those internal to it (the sense of collective loss and solidarity), for all camp Palestinians underwent similar experiences of uprooting, poverty, discrimination, and the feeling of loss of control over one's destiny," (Peteet 1991: 27). The Palestinian collective narrative influences the Palestinian national identity by allowing for the creation of solidarity through the sharing of these stories.

Another of the major themes represented in the collective narrative is Palestine as the homeland. However, as Dawn Chatty points out, "the imagined 'homeland' acquires a mythical status and image. [Palestine] is assumed to be unchanged by the departure and relocation of its dispossessed. Yet the way in which the representation of the imagined community is drawn and fixed rests largely with the people themselves," (Chatty 2010, 25). This is how refugees create a sense of community, and use the imagery of the idealized 'homeland' to cement the bonds of national identity. While Palestinian peoples' rights to land and compensation are central to their claims of loss of their homeland, the loss of their homes and the desire to return serves to form a powerful rhetoric, around which to centralize a Palestinian collective narrative.

The right to return of all Palestinian refugees is strengthened by the United Nations Resolution 194. In 1948, the United Nations passed Resolution 194, which established two major factors that directly impact Palestinian refugees. First, it established a Conciliation Commission to try to resolve problems between Israel and Palestine, to work out a peace agreement (Benvenisti, et al. 2007: 191). Second, it called for refugees to be able to return to their homes, or to be compensated if they cannot (Benvenisti, et al. 2007: 191-2). Most of the

original refugees were unable to return to their homes, and were not compensated. The right to return is a highly contentious issue, since it still is unresolved. The main argument with Palestinians who are refused the right to return to their homes in the Occupied Territories and Israel is that even though "repatriation under conflict is not uncommon. However, the Palestinian case of repatriation under conflict does not concern the major bulk of the population that was dispersed: the refugees," due to Israel's refusal to allow them to return (Benvenisti, et al. 2007: 182). These refugees, due to their inability to return to their homes, and their lack of compensation for lost land because of Israel's absolute refusal to allow them to return, are left in limbo and made to live as refugees either in the Occupied Territories, sometimes abroad, but usually in neighboring Arab countries. Dawn Chatty argues that for many researchers a refugee is an individual who embodies liminality and challenges the normalcy that is associated with clearly defined nation-states (2010: 296). She further argues that many governments "sought to transform the displaced and dispossessed into subjects and/or citizens as quickly as possible, regarding their liminality as a temporary physical condition to be overcome," (Chatty 2010: 296). This is due to the challenge that refugees represented towards the sovereign nation-states. In order to deal with refugees' liminality, nation-states created refugee camps to control and define refugees (Chatty 2010: 296-7). It is within this context that Palestinians call to be allowed to return to their homes in Israel and the Occupied Territories, or for compensation if they cannot return to their homes, this argument is known as "right of return."

The right of return is a central facet in the formation of the Palestinian collective narrative, which shapes the Palestinian identity. Right of return is also a major goal of most Palestinian political groups, which focus upon the eventual creation of a sovereign nation-state for Palestinians. Return to Palestine is a main theme of the Palestinian collective narrative.

Demands of return and its extensive use in the collective narrative, serve the function of creating an alternative to formalized memorialization of Palestinian identity and suffering. Formalized memorialization being the creation of memorials, like statuary or museums around which "to restore the heritage and formulate the national ethos, both as a political tool for preserving the national entity and as an effective way to mobilize the people into a process of national struggle," (Litvak 2009: 39). An example of the use of the collective narrative as a memorial of Palestinians' plight is the published writings of Mahmood Tarbush. Tarbush wrote a series of letters, and opinion pieces, to various international newspapers about Palestinians' plight, which have now been collected and published in as a book called *Reflections of a Palestinian* (1986). While writing an opinion piece to *Le Monde* addressing the Sabra and Shatila massacres refugee camp massacres in Lebanon, Tarbush states, "We Palestinians are human beings and we have a fundamental right to live...Left alone, we would have chosen to stay in the homes and farms of our ancestors. Instead, we found ourselves unwanted strangers in our own homeland, constantly being chased, with no right to protest or to exercise our basic rights as citizens," (Tarbush 1986: 39). Thus the Palestinian collective narrative serves as a way to memorialize historic Palestine and historical events that hold great importance for Palestinian refugees.

Maria Holt (2011) argues that Palestinian women relate differently to the Palestinian collective narrative than how men relate to it. There has been some research on the gendered experience of the Palestinian collective narrative. Holt draws on gendered differences arguing that women relate more closely to the collective narrative and stories that they tell, as women tend to focus more on personal details than men do (Holt 2007: 251). Holt's research also looks at how women change and relate to the collective narrative of Palestinian identity through suffering; how women are able to incorporate that into their own personal lives; then share it

with others through the sharing of stories. Palestinian women's collective narrative focuses more on personal loss, and connecting this loss to the larger conversation that focuses on the loss of all Palestinians (Litvak 2009: 181-2). This connection usually happens through literary devices, like poetry. Meir Litvak argues that women faced backlash, both religious and socially, for their activism and voicing of their stories because of social expectations of Palestinian society (Litvak 2009: 188-9). However, their own stories seem to be lost in the "official" collective narrative, as it is predominantly men and men's stories that researchers tend to focus on (Killian, et al. 2012). Women need more opportunities to share their stories, and while this has been occurring thanks to researchers, like Rosemary Sayigh, Maria Holt, and others. Palestinian women's stories must continue to be more widely recognized by both Palestinians and researchers studying the collective narrative. This acknowledgment of women's stories, and their voices, prevents further marginalization of women in the Palestinian collective narrative. However, it was not just the initial war in 1948 that shaped the Palestinian collective narrative. The collective narrative is continuously being shaped by the on going political situation and events that face Palestinians.

In 1967, the Six Day war occurred, and Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza, the Sinai region, the Golan Heights, and East Jerusalem. A large proportion of Palestinians reside in the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and Gaza. However, Israel controls the movement in and out of the Occupied Territories, and travel to neighboring Arab nation-states. Israel is able to enforce this control because of the Six Day War. It was during this war that Israel’s surprise attack on Syria, Egypt, and Jordan, in what was called a pre-emptive strike by Israel, was due to political tensions and rhetoric that was coming predominantly from Syria and Egypt. Both Syria and Egypt were spouting rhetoric about crushing Israel, and freeing Palestinians, but it was just political rhetoric (Morris 1999). Israel, with aid from the United States, was able to clearly win,

by destroying the majority of Egypt's air force, and successfully pushing Syrian troops out of the Golan Heights when annexing it from Syria (Morris 1999). This led to more Palestinian refugees fleeing the Occupied Territories and Israel. An estimated 300,000 refugees fled to escape more violence associated with the annexation the Golan Heights. This lead to more tension throughout the Middle East and the occupation of Gaza, West Bank, and East Jerusalem by Israeli forces.

Tensions continuously built until there were larger protests, boycotts, and eventually, riots in 1987 that lead to the First Intifada. One of the largest events that led to large-scale protesting and civil disobedience from the Palestinians, was the killing of four people who were part of a protest in Jabalia, who were run over by an army truck (McDowall 1989: 1). The First Intifada spanned from 1987 through 1993. It was the Oslo Accord in 1993 that ended the First Intifada, when a treaty was agreed upon, and Palestinians were given some of the concessions that they demanded from Israel. For example, Israel agreed to remove many of its military forces from occupying West Bank and Gaza; and it allowed the Palestinian Liberation Organization to institute the Palestinian Authority to have some self-rule over Gaza and West Bank. Unfortunately, the treaty was vague with exact specifications of when Israel would extricate itself from West Bank and Gaza entirely. Regardless of this, the Palestinian Liberation Organization accepted the agreements (Benvenisti, et al. 2007: 496). However, due to the vagueness of the Oslo Accord, Israel managed to cling to many controlling measures, like the limiting travel of Palestinians in and out of the Occupied Territories. Israel further complicated this by prohibiting Palestinian refugees from "carry[ing] the documents of the Palestinian Authority. They [are] not allowed to return to elect, to stand for election, to offer an opinion, or to have any political contribution [in the Occupied Territories]," (Barghouti 1997: 139). Israel also continued to build settlements, which have been determined by the United Nations as illegal,

in the West Bank and Gaza (Beinin and Hajjar 2001). This continued oppression and building of settlements lead to continued tensions between the Occupied Territories and Israel. Many Palestinians lost land and homes when Israel annexed new areas to build settlements (Benvenisti, et al. 2007, Morris 1999, Beinin and Hajjar 2001). These displaced Palestinians had to move to new areas in the Occupied Territories, or to other neighboring countries and start over.

The Second Intifada started in 2000, and was also known as Al-Aqsa Intifada. It started with Palestinian protests against Arial Sharon's visit to the heavily disputed area of the Noble Sanctuary (Beinin and Hajjar 2001). Israel retaliated against the protests, and several Palestinians died in the ensuing attempt to crush the protests. Extreme violence broke out with Palestinians calling for large-scale revolt, and the Israeli government, trying to crush this new rebellion, turned to heavy handed suppression methods, like using live ammunition against Palestinian civilians (Beinin and Hajjar 2001). The Palestinians that lived in the Occupied Territories fought for their rights and protested against the actions of the Israeli government. The actual end of this Intifada is heavily disputed, and there was no officially recognized ending date for the Al-Aqsa Intifada, but the amount of violence tapered off, with the end of the Second Intifada being recognized as 2005 (Benvenisti, et al. 2007). What was evident, Palestinians saw the peace process as a mistake and had "definitively rejected Oslo, and top officials of the PA now say that UN resolutions must form the basis of future final status talks [with Israel]," (Beinin and Hajjar 2001). This has led to renewed international efforts to cement peace between Israel and Palestine by initiating peace talks.

In 2011, the Palestinian Authority petitioned to become a member of the United Nations. While this was initially rejected, in 2012 Palestine was upgraded by the United Nations to "Non-member Observer State", putting it at the same level as Vatican City. This upgrade was heralded

by the Palestinian Authority, at the time, as a win for Palestine in terms of international recognition. This was initially thought to give more leverage to Palestinian refugees living abroad, but has yet to materialize into any concrete advantages. Currently, the United States' Secretary of State, John Kerry, is spearheading yet another attempt to get Palestine and Israel to agree to further peace talks. While many reports seem optimistic, it is a challenging process with Palestinians calling for more sovereignty, and a demand that Israel stop all settlement building before the Palestinian Authority will agree to more peace talks (Daraghmeh 2013). However, Israel continues to annex and claim lands in East Jerusalem, West Bank, and Gaza where Palestinians wish to form their own state eventually. It is important to remember the historical context within which this peace process operates under, and to not forget the large refugee populations that have been forced from their homes, never compensated, and that Israel refuses to allow them to return to even West Bank or Gaza. It appears, at least for now, that the Palestinian refugees living outside of Israel and the Occupied Territories will not be part of the new peace process, and will not be allowed the right to return.

Throughout the various wars and conflicts numerous Palestinians have fled Palestine to other countries as refugees. As of 2012, there are close to 5 million registered Palestinian refugees living outside of Palestine (UNRWA 2013). Palestinian refugees fled to several neighboring Arab countries like Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and Jordan, during the various wars and conflicts; each country has their own laws in place that give varying degrees of freedoms and rights to Palestinian refugees. Palestinians face difficulties in traveling throughout the region, and frequently experience discrimination in their host countries. An example of discrimination is when Palestinians are limited in their ability to travel between Arab countries due to lack of recognition of their citizenship. Another example of discrimination is "In Lebanon there is now

a government decree prohibiting Palestinians resident in camps from working in eighty-seven professions," (Barghouti 1997: 139). Quite a substantial number of Palestinians fled to Jordan, which at this time, gives Palestinian refugees the most legal rights. As of January 2012, there was an estimated 1,979,580 Palestinian refugees living in Jordan (UNRWA 2013). In Jordan, the majority of Palestinian refugees were offered citizenship, but they are still considered to be Palestinian refugees by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), so long as their family is registered with UNRWA. UNRWA defines Palestinian refugees as "people whose normal place of residence was Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948, who lost both their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict," further stating, "The descendants of the original Palestine refugees are also eligible for registration," (UNRWA 2013). Citizenship in Jordan allows Palestinian refugees to move more freely throughout the country, and allows them to travel more easily to other Arab countries. However, often Palestinian-Jordanians are not allowed to travel back to historic Palestine, or the Occupied Territories because of visa requirements from Israel, or they lack a "Huweya" (a Palestinian identity card) and its associated travel documents. Palestinian-Jordanians also face quite a bit of discrimination from Bedouin-Jordanians, which limit their opportunities in many areas of life, like education, politics, and employment. Thus, Palestinian refugees face unique challenges every day, even if they do maintain Jordanian citizenship. Palestinian refugees that live in Jordan can live in the refugee camps, but are not required to, and many live outside the refugee camps in various cities throughout Jordan. There are ten refugee camps in Jordan for Palestinians, four were established after 1948 and the other six were established after 1967 (UNRWA 2013). One of the main Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan was the Zarqa Camp, located originally on the outskirts of Zarqa city.

The city of Zarqa was founded in 1902 by Chechnyan and Circassian refugees who were fleeing persecution in the northern part of the Ottoman Empire (Chatty 2010: 119). The city formed around the edges of the Zarqa River, just about thirty minutes north and east of Amman, the capital of Jordan, and became a small, but thriving community. Palestinians came to a refugee camp that was built in 1949 by the Red Cross near Zarqa, which was called Zarqa Refugee Camp (UNRWA 2013). The Zarqa Refugee Camp is considered to be the oldest refugee camp established in Jordan, and dates back to the original 1948 Arab-Israeli war. Today, Zarqa is the third largest city in Jordan, and the city has grown so large that it has engulfed the refugee camp. Though the camp still exists and houses refugees, many Palestinians have moved into the city of Zarqa, forming their own neighborhoods. Zarqa refugee camp currently hosts approximately 20,000 residents (UNRWA 2013). The city of Zarqa is known for being an industrial center for Jordan, with many factories providing jobs for the residents of both the city and the refugee camp. Zarqa holds a wonderful, unique mixture of metropolitan convenience and small-town feel. By this I mean, Zarqa is a large metropolitan city, but the neighborhoods are divided to allow neighbors to be close to one another, and often people are extremely friendly with their neighbors. Everyone in a particular neighborhood knows each other, and regularly visits one another. The emotional closeness is almost tangible due to strong ties that Palestinians build with one another. At the same time, Zarqa city allows people to experience all aspects of Jordan's diverse mixture of cultures. People's identity is tied into not only the city of Zarqa, but also to their family and their family's history of how they came to reside there; and this is what I found when talking with many of the Palestinian women who live in various neighborhoods in Zarqa.

Literature Review:

A. Identity

Personal identity and collective identities are what make up people around the world, and this is true of the many Palestinians that live in Zarqa. My research focuses on identity in the context of belonging to multiple groups, and the negotiation that occurs by an individual to maintain multiple identities in the face of conflict--conflict between identities, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and in the larger framework--both in the historical circumstances and the current context. There are a variety of ways to define identity, but usually it is always in terms of the relation of the individual to a group, and involves some form of cultural construction. For example, Judy El-Bushra defines identity as "the social process where by individuals come to identify themselves with a particular configuration of social roles and relationships," (2000: 67). In this relationship, identity is structured around social relationships and roles that an individual plays within society. For Yuval Davis identity is "specific forms of cultural narratives which constitute commonalities and differences between self and others," (1997: 43). This definition focuses again on the cultural construction of identity, but focuses more on the dichotomy of an individual versus a collective group. Sabri Ciftci argues that "identity is best understood as a relational concept that has formative effects on individual attitudes and preferences through a mechanism based on notions of in-group and out-group," (2013: 30). Maria Holt examines identity by looking "at understandings of identity, which spring from 'personal history' and 'social location' and are linked to 'social processes' and 'cultural narratives'." (Holt 2007: 247). These previously discussed definitions of what constitutes identity illustrates the differences where scholars tend to place their focus when examining the construct of identity; whether it is the role of identity for groups of people or individuals, and the roles of individuals within groups.

For my research, I incorporate many aspects of these definitions, as I define identity as being embodied within a specific context that incorporates personal identity and an individual's association within the larger societal framework. Often this association centers on the Palestinian collective narrative, and personal experiences that can be verbalized through these narratives. The collective narrative cements bonds with others who identify as Palestinian, these interrelating identities effectively create a national group that focuses on the production and recreation of Palestinian culture.

Self-identification by informants as having Palestinian identity is important, as much as an individual's understanding of what it means to be a Palestinian, which serves to shape and craft the Palestinian national identity. National identity is not formal citizenship, but rather a sense of belonging to a group of people, or a nation (Joseph 2000). It is usually tied to an individual's culture, language, religion, history of a region, and other factors that help to delineate a group. Ernest Gellner (1983) differentiated national identity in two ways, one centering around shared culture, and the other centering around voluntary affiliation; a distinction that is useful when examining refugees located in a transnational settings. According to Litvak, the Palestinian national identity is a part of the Palestinian collective narrative, and central to its formation (2009: 38). In this research, rather than seeing the Palestinian national identity being a part of the collective narrative, I see the two as distinct elements that are closely inter-related and serve to inform each other. The collective narrative, is the stories that elaborate upon the loss, suffering, dislocation, return, and idealized imagery of historical Palestine that Palestinians have experienced since the Nakbah. Palestinian identity is associated the notion that there is a population (i.e. Palestinians) who share a common belonging to historic Palestine. Additionally, Palestinian identity is further associated with how Palestinians are recognized, or

not recognized by the international community. For example, when Palestinians become citizens of another country, many times other nations will cease to acknowledge them as Palestinian refugees. This is partially due to assumed assimilation into the new country and new culture. Palestinian refugees essentially become invisible by becoming citizens of another country, even though they remain Palestinian refugees.

Citizenship has to do with being legally recognized as belonging to a sovereign nation-state by holding documentation declaring that an individual resides in, or has the right to reside within that particular country (Joseph 2000, Anderson 1991). Suad Joseph (2000) argues that citizenship is a modern construction of nation-states. That it is enforced through various laws and regulations. Joseph further argues that nation-states have taken to using blood and land ties as a way to naturalize citizenship, and thus demarcate who is a "native" and who is a "foreigner" or "immigrant" (Joseph 2000: 8). Interestingly, UNRWA's definition of who constitutes Palestinian refugees, and who is eligible for services show that it not only sovereign countries who can determine who is a refugee, but international institutions, as well (UNRWA 2013). While UNRWA is not a nation-state, UNRWA uses blood ties and previous land ties to determine who is a Palestinian refugee and who is not. It is an example of how institutions can act similarly to sovereign nation-states in defining who belongs and who does not belong to a particular group. This formal recognition by UNRWA of refugee status helps to solidify Palestinians' claims that they are a nation that is being denied many of their basic rights. It enables Palestinians to demand recognition of their suffering, at the international level. This allows Palestinians to argue for a sovereign nation-state of their own, separate from Israel.

B. Nationalism

Nationalism is a relatively modern and culturally constructed ideology or belief that

associates a group of people with a "nation" (Anderson 1991). However, a "nation" can be many things. Benedict Anderson defined the nation as "an imagined political community--and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign," (Anderson 1991: 6). Anthony Smith (1989) divides nationalism into a dichotomy of "civic nationalism" versus "ethnic nationalism". Smith asserts that "civic nationalism" has three main parts, "historic territory, legal-political community, and common civic culture and ideology," (1989: 11). "Ethnic nationalism" on the other hand, focuses on descent and kinship ties as it is centered in an individual's "native culture" (Smith 1989). Conversely, Gellner (1983) argues that "Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist," (15). Similarly, Eric Hobsbawm defines nationalism as "primarily a principle which holds that the political and national unity should be congruent," (1990: 9). Both Gellner and Hobsbawm are of the opinion that nationalism arises from nation-states. However, Hobsbawm argues that researchers cannot take nation-states' self-identification as absolute truth, national identity does not trump all other individual identities, and that national identity can change over time as it is not a static concept (1983). Nationalism is a combination of these identities, as it focuses on a group of people who self-identify as belonging to a specific group that is normally tied to a specific region, and is used to create unity amongst people. However, at the same time, it can be changed over time, and should not be accepted as full "Truth", since it is culturally constructed within a specific historical and territorial context.

Palestinian nationalism emerged out of a struggle against Western imperialism, and later on, Zionism through a complex historical context. Previous movements, such as Ottoman Loyalty and Pan-Arabism, lead to strong local nationalist movements in order to combat the colonization of the region by the French and British, as "Power politics was the driving motive of

both England and France. In the course of implementing their imperialist ambitions [England and France] inflicted much suffering on many nations and deprived others of their independence and right to self determination," (Musliah 1988: 128-9). However, there are a few different movements that arose out of this fight against Western imperialism.

Arab nationalism, Pan-Arabism, and Palestinian nationalism are all interconnected, yet distinctly different. Arab nationalism is different from Pan-Arabism, as explained by Rashid Khalidi, mainly arguing that, "the study of Arab nationalism has tended to remain isolated from broader trends in history and the social sciences and specifically from the comparative study of nationalism," (Khalidi 1991: 1363). The first problem, is that historians who study Arab nationalism and Ottoman loyalty, according to him, do not understand the important influence that each had on the other, and because of that, authors are missing out on relevant research that has been conducted by others done in their complementary area of study (Khalidi 1991: 1363). He further argues that this had lead to "an overemphasis on direct European influences and to numerous other kinds of distortions," (Khalidi 1991: 1363). Another major problem, Khalidi points out is the lack of use of critical theory approaches when studying nationalism, which has lead to researches simply taking the narratives presented by nationalists as absolute truth, and not sufficient analysis being applied to these narratives (Khalidi 1991: 1364). The third major problem Khalidi sees--is the research being biased, or influenced by concurrent politics during the time the researchers are conducting research (Khalidi 1991: 1364).

Khalidi defines Arab nationalism as a historical, context specific process that, "in its fully developed form represented an expression of identity and of group solidarity within the projected new format of the nation-state by an amalgam of old elites and new social forces at once desirous of seeing their society resist control by outside forces and deeply influenced by the example and

the challenge of the West," (Khalidi 1991: 1364-5). He further elaborates on this definition, that Arabism is a blending of old and new ideas to create an identity, which is something that many Arab nation-states chose to encourage through institutionalization of this identity, but that it was adopted in varying forms and at various times (Khalidi 1991: 1365). Arab nationalism was also challenged by other identities that were evolving out of the political context of the time, including religious identities and local nationalist movements (Khalidi 1991: 1365). It is important that Khalidi focuses on the historical context from which Arab nationalism evolved, since it is important to understand how and why Arab nationalism came about. His highlighting the important and sometimes competing local nationalism is important because it shows that not all Arabs support Arab nationalism, but can additionally support other localized nationalism, like Palestinian nationalism, as these are not mutually exclusive. Palestinian nationalism influences the collective narrative, and at the same time the collective narrative shapes Palestinian nationalism through the meanings and symbolism attributed to Palestinian national identity. There are many ideologies that exist in the Middle East, and while all of them need to be understood individually, it is necessary as well to understand how they work together, or compete with one another, in the sphere of politics of the Middle East.

Palestinian nationalism has been laid out by many scholars as if it were in direct opposition to Zionism. Many Palestinians did view Zionism as another Western invasion; "In Palestine, the life-and-death issue was national survival in the face of the deadly threat of Zionism, an alien Jewish settler movement of European provenance. Syria and Iraq faced a different challenge. There, the crisis was not national survival but political independence; it was a crisis of countering the hegemony of France and England and of finding a framework that would satisfy the aspiration for self-determination," (Musliah 1988: 214). However Muhammad

Musliah states it best when he states, "We may conclude, therefore, that Zionism did not create Palestinian nationalism. What Zionism did was provide the Palestinians with a focus for their national struggle. In other words, Zionism was the focus of the Palestinians and the pivot around which their politics centered," (Musliah 1988: 217). Palestinian nationalism grew out of Pan-Arabism and Arab Nationalism and was in opposition to Western intervention in the region. Additionally, Palestinian nationalism did not evolve solely in opposition to Zionism, but rather from the historical context and politics of the time, and along with Ottoman loyalty and Arab nationalism.

I further argue that nationalism, and particularly Palestinian nationalism, is also a gendered experience. This is supported by Sitralega Maunaguru's who states that, "a central feature of the project of nationalism is the construction of feminized and masculinized practices and ideologies in the imagined community of the nation," (2009: 157). I argue this is true in the case of Palestinian refugees who are predominantly living outside their "homeland" of Palestine. There is no sovereign nation-state of Palestine at this point in time. The Palestinian "nation" is tied primarily to cultural practices, religion, language, and the Palestinian collective narrative, with each of these being gendered in experience and practice. However, the idealized mythological "homeland of Palestine" still plays a large part in forming these constructs of Palestinian national identity and the Palestinian collective narrative, where the "right of return" is a central facet. The "right of return" is one way in which all Palestinians argue for more agency and autonomy. I agree with Benvenisti who argues, "that gender in the practice of return relates to the questions of agency and subject-formation," (Benvenisti, et al. 2007: 178). These arguments of agency and autonomy are central to gender and feminist theory, particularly those that examine the role of "Third World Feminism". Agency and autonomy are key issues that all

Palestinian refugees face, but it has been women whose voices have been lacking from much of the literature that has been produced up until recently. Women are still not equally represented in literature, and I will be addressing this by investigating the amount of agency and autonomy that Palestinian women have through their relationships with Palestinian national identity and the Palestinian collective narrative.

C. Gender

Gender studies are not a new field of research, but it is only relatively recently been applied to migration theory, refugee studies, and globalization theory. An individual's gender identity can change how they see and experience the world. What an individual's gender identity is *perceived* to be can have a drastic impact on how others treat and interact with them. Gender studies are a necessary component when examining the various challenges that refugees face. Indeed, Sitralega Maunaguru argues "the construction of 'women' is in itself a product of the irreducible intersection of the relations of power and gender in a social field," (2009: 157). This relates well with Patricia Pessar and Sarah Mahler's (2003) work where they argue for more gender studies to be applied to the transnational movement of people.

Pessar and Mahler (2003) focus on an introduction of gender theory to issues of migration and transnational movement, and how it can be applied to help further future migration and transnational movement research. The argument presented by Pessar and Mahler is that women are not as deeply examined as men in regards to migration research and literature. This is supported by arguments made by Suha Sabbagh and Ghada Talhami, who argue that United States feminism has a tendency to ignore third world feminism, or treat it as if it is not as valid as Western feminism (Sabbagh and Talhami 1990, Preface).

"Third World Feminism" is a term used to address feminist movements that do not

originate in the West, and may not address all that Western feminist movements believe need to be addressed. For example, these feminist movements may not attack institutions of patriarchy, which Samira Haj defines as "the patrilineal family complex of classic patriarchy that provides the culture framework for internalizing and reproducing female subordination," (Haj 1992: 763) However, Haj feels that addressing the problems of "Third World Feminism" is extremely limiting. She argues that, "the overarching assumptions of feminist theory have generally been Eurocentric and ethnocentric," (Haj 1992: 762). This is extremely problematic as it skews the literature and research. Additionally, Sabbagh and Talhami argue that "Because the American Feminist movement was influenced by consciously Zionist women, the political mobilization of Palestinian women was seen in a negative light...the liberationist struggle of Palestinian women was portrayed in the United States as a male-dominated effort," (Sabbagh and Talhami 1990, Preface). Julie Peteet and Barbara Harlow's show a different perspective, arguing that "While Western feminists currently are more sensitive to and appreciative of Middle Eastern women's experience, tension still arises from Western assumptions of universal rather than culturally specific values," (Peteet and Barlow 1991: 7). This illustrates the changes and divisions of thought on the matter, and while there is more research being done on Palestinians, and researchers are starting to examine feminist movements in the Middle East (even those movements started by Palestinian women), there still exist large gaps in the research due to the initial ignoring of Palestinian feminism.

It is necessary to understand basic theories that are used to analyze women's movement across borders in order to understand the context that migration theory has previously related to women. Women, even after feminist theory is introduced, seem to be largely viewed by many researchers as passive, and are usually showed as moving with a spouse, or to be emigrating with

family (Pessar and Mahler 2003, 815). Pessar and Mahler (2003) argue the need to examine an individual's agency based on gender norms of the own individual's culture, and call their theory "Gendered Geographies of Power." Pessar and Mahler's theory incorporates power hierarchies, such as a person's social and economic status, across transnational borders (Pessar and Mahler 2003, 815). Often times, these women are moving in order to better their lives; they cross borders in search of more equality, better jobs, or better education (Burjis1993). In these cases, migration is viewed as a form of agency that an individual uses to better their situation. This is important and relates like Pessar and Mahler's work on women in migration theory, as they argue that “Work on transnational migration and gender has much to gain by examining those genres of cultural production that contribute to the ways in which gender is represented, consumed and practiced transnationally," (Pessar and Mahler 2003, 834). I agree with Pessar and Mahler that other feminist movements constructed outside of Western ideologies are just as effective and valid as the traditional Western feminist movement. It is necessary to study these other feminist movements, like Islamic feminism and "Third World Feminism" because "such an engagement with cultural matters marks a departure from the standard transnational migration scholarship that focuses solely on migrant social relations and institutions,” (Pessar and Mahler 2003, 834). This is important when looking at how a Palestinian refugee culture is created and sustained by the refugees themselves based on the power dynamics they experience in relation to the state of Israel, their relation to their host nation through their use of agency, and within their own society.

Palestinian women have agency, particularly Palestinian women who fight patriarchy and occupation at the same time by joining grass-roots organizations, labor movements, and women's groups (Haj 1992: 774). Within this context women and their roles within society become part of a larger political discussion in nationalist movements, which has lead them to not only be anti-

occupation, but also anti-patriarchy (Haj 1992: 776). While these organizations do not attack hegemonic gender norms as Western feminist movements have in the past, it is important to maintain the specific cultural and historical context through which women's struggles occur (Haj 1992: 778).

Samira Haj (1992) examines the political, historical, and cultural aspects that lead to patriarchy, and to the formation of non-Western feminist movements that were subsequently created within Palestinian society. Haj (1992), like previously mentioned researchers, points out that Western feminism has taken a negative, and mono-dimensional examination of the Middle East as a whole (Haj 1992: 762). This is a major problem in Western feminist research, and something that needs to be addressed more in literature. This relates to my own research as my research allows Palestinian women to voice their views, but it has given a larger context. This is done by examining how they relate to Palestinian national identity and the complexity of their situation being Palestinian refugees living in Jordan. It allows for a more complex understanding of the issues that Palestinian women face, not only relevant in the occupied territories, but also in the larger context of displaced Palestinian women. This work can be used to elucidate the complexity in which Palestinian women live, and help to create a better understanding and reading into my own research. It is important to maintain the historical and cultural context, while at the same time understanding additional pressures--like patriarchy and discrimination--that make having agency and autonomy difficult for Palestinian women. This research sheds light on the ways women can use to combat these pressures they are facing. I argue that this is done every day, and is embodied in how women view and explain their relationship with Palestine, how they experience daily life, in traditions that are cemented in religious rituals; and that is all experienced in a gendered way.

This is similar in some ways to Rosemary Sayigh's (2007) work on the importance of how women view themselves in relation to traditional gender norms and stereotypes, and how these norms and stereotypes are used to define these women as Palestinian. Of course, there are examples of conforming to societal hegemonic gender norms, and then examples of resistance to gender norms. Sayigh points out that in present times, women have more economic freedom, political movement, and social movement than previously thought in the refugee camps; especially since, many "camps" have turned into "permanent camps", or are now towns according to officials in Lebanon (Sayigh 2007: 88-9). Many camps for Palestinians have become "permanent camps" or towns in Jordan as well, mirroring what is occurring in Lebanon as a result of the long term displacement of large numbers of Palestinians. The shift in gender norms in Palestinian camps and neighborhoods with regard to expected and accepted gender norms is important. These shifts show gender norms are shifting to accommodate the long-term displacement of Palestinian refugees. My research will probe whether or not this is true for Palestinians living in Jordan, and in what capacities these shifts transpire.

A way to examine this is through standpoint feminist theory because it focuses on knowledge as culturally constructed and socially situated. Standpoint feminist theory argues that marginalized groups recognize this information as culturally created more easily than non-marginalized groups. What I mean by this, is that marginalized populations are reflexive of their position within larger cultural contexts, and this allows the researcher to probe deeper in their research of such groups. Standpoint feminism, also, takes into consideration an understanding of the power dynamics between the researcher and informant. Sandra Harding examines power dynamics and intersectionality in society. She argues that, "Only through such struggles can we begin to see beneath the appearances created by an unjust social order to the reality of how this

social order is in fact constructed and maintained. This need for struggle emphasizes the fact that a feminist standpoint is not something that anyone can have simply by claiming it. It is an achievement. A standpoint differs in this respect from a perspective, which anyone can have simply by ‘opening one’s eyes’. (1991: 127)". I view my informants' position as a marginalized group, Palestinian refugees, who share a collective knowledge that has been culturally constructed and positioned. Palestinian refugees have struggled for recognition of their status as a people, most commonly through their actions and participation in the collective narrative. By utilizing standpoint feminism, researchers are better able to understand Palestinian refugees' culture, and address the strong critique that exists regarding the limited voice of Palestinian women.

This relates back to an important aspect of gender studies and feminist scholarship by examining women's agency. Caitlin Killian, Jennifer Olmsted, and Alexis Doyle study (2012) women's agency in where women refugees choose to move, and how they respond to the social expectations that are placed upon them. The authors feel that this research is new and exciting due to the fact that women are rarely studied when it involves migration, and when women are included in research, it is usually in the movement of families. This relates to previous gender research mentioned above done by Pessar and Mahler (2003), Holt (2007), and Burjis (1993). One of the arguments put forth in the article, is that women are not as studied as men, due to a lack of data on women to draw from (Killan, et al. 2012: 433). This is why conducting research among Palestinian women refugees is important. I plan to build on these frameworks, and add in a gendered analysis by examining the roles that women play in creating, perpetuating, conforming to, and resisting against certain aspects of the Palestinians national identity and the Palestinian collective narrative when living as refugees in Jordan.

Methodology:

This research was born out of a goal of showing how Palestinian women work to create and continue to inform Palestinian national identity, how national identity is inter-related with the Palestinian collective narrative, and how gender can influence an individual's relation to the collective narrative. I was strongly influenced by feminist research methodologies, specifically standpoint feminism. The goal of standpoint feminist theory is to focus predominantly on women's stories, and their personal experiences. The reason for this is due to the long-standing tradition in many research fields that focus solely on men's perspectives. The focus on women's perspectives is important as women make up about half of the world's population, and have been a largely silenced group of individuals in relation to research. Standpoint feminist theory focuses on women's perspectives in order to better illustrate and inform research (Sprague 2005, Esterberg 2002). It is also important in this theory to defend and emphasize women's perspectives (Hill Collins 2000, Sprague 2005, Clough 1994).

Modern standpoint feminist theory seeks to bolster research by emphasizing women's voices, and acknowledging the informants' particular context. Previous research by Harding (1993) sought to examine marginalized groups because she felt that they would give the most insight into a culture's structure, including elites in said culture. Patricia Hill Collins (2000) coupled standpoint feminism with Marxism, while examining the multiple oppressions that African-American women faced. Thus through standpoint feminist research, theorists focus specifically on women's views and positions, but in relation to the larger culture framework, in order to elaborate upon and illumine the underlying power structures that exist within it. Additionally, Feminist frameworks tend to operate in attempting to equalize power between the researcher and the informant. The goal of my research was to see things from the women's point

of view and relate to them on a deeper level than just as a researcher and informant. A central part of feminist research, and particularly standpoint feminism, is striving for a more equal power relationship between researcher and informant (Esterberg 2002). To do this the investigator tries to develop a more friendly relationship, which allows the informant a certain amount of leeway during the interview process (Esterberg 2002, Sprague 2005, Hill Collins 2000).

In order to meet these goals, I developed strong rapport with the women to whom I spoke. It was important to develop relationships with them in order to get honest opinions and answers. I was able to do so partially due to spending previous time in Jordan, and having married into a Palestinian family who resided near my research area. I used familial contacts in order to secure a place to live during my research, and to develop initial connections for several of my initial interviews. By using my familial connections, I was able to gain other individuals' trust much more quickly. Since, I had married into a local Palestinian family, I was a foreigner, but many considered me an insider of the community, since I had married in. This was problematic as well as useful. I had greater freedom and access to neighbors, who were able to help me find additional women for my interviews. Several of my initial informants were neighbors or family friends, who then were able to suggest additional informants for my research. Through this snowball style collection method, I was able to gain a broad base of informants for my research. However, it was problematic as I was expected to adhere to specific cultural norms, including spending a lot of time visiting family, which sometimes limited the amount of research I could accomplish.

Other cultural and language barriers at times proved to be challenging as well. Though I can converse well in Arabic, it is not my first language, and this proved problematic on several

occasions. Most of my questions were written in formal Arabic, and I had trouble figuring out the local dialect equivalent for some questions. As far as cultural barriers, there were a few incidents in regarding typical attire, and minor social graces that I did not realize would be a problem, but were. I quickly adopted local custom for dress, and started wearing a headscarf when I went out, as it made meetings with informants, and traveling through neighborhoods much easier. The social graces were quickly learned, after the first embarrassing mishaps.

This research focuses on how Palestinian women understand Palestinian national identity, how Palestinian women exhibit and talk about their national identity, and how this identity's relates to the Palestinian collective narrative. Most Palestinians living in Jordan, are also Jordanian citizens, hold Jordanian passports, and embrace some aspects of Jordanian identity, which brings out some challenges in understanding Palestinians' national identity construction. I examine the inter-connections between tacit and explicit expressions of certain aspects of identity, and how they affect women's views of themselves. This research was conducted among Palestinian women living in Zarqa, Jordan. I lived in the city of Zarqa, in order to experience every day life amongst Palestinian refugees who also live in the city. There is a Palestinian refugee camp that is located in the city, but all of my research was conducted in the city, not in the camp. However, the majority of my informants still considered themselves Palestinian refugees, and many were recognized as such by UNWRA. My research was performed from the end of May through the end of July in 2013. During this period, I interviewed approximately thirty women who are Palestinian, and live in Zarqa.

Due to the nature of the topic, studying women's role in the Palestinian national identity, would be almost impossible to conduct if the researcher was male. This is due to separation of the sexes amongst practicing Muslims, which many of my informants were. Additionally, if the

researcher was of the opposite sex, most likely many informants would not have provided as detailed information to the researcher. Interviewees are female Palestinian refugees, but all hold Jordanian citizenship. This will show the difference between a voluntary nationalism associated with a refugee's host nation, and an ethnic nationalism associated with Palestinian's "homeland" (Gellner 1983). I wish to examine this unique relationship and further elaborate on the dynamic nature of Palestinian national identity.

While conducting my research I lived in Zarqa with my husband's family. They are Palestinian refugees, who hold Jordanian citizenship. Living with them allowed me to experience first hand what daily life is like for women, and to better understand the expectations that are held for young Palestinian women. I also had the opportunity to travel to other households in Zarqa, and this allowed me to conduct interviews, and witness other Palestinian households through participant-observation. I participated in many social events, like weddings, iftar meals, and social gatherings. I helped around the house, cooked meals, and helped with child care. By living with a local family, visiting, and staying at other Palestinian households allowed me to have a broader understanding of the variety of household structure that occurs. This enabled me to understand not only what women say is expected of them, but also what they actually do.

My sample of informants was built upon previous connections that I formed from my earlier excursions to Jordan. I used these connections to build up a network of individuals to participate in my research. To try to limit a sampling bias of "what it means to be a Palestinian woman," I utilized my initial contacts to find other women to interview, and gain a broader base for my research. I had a diverse sample, and interviewed women of various ages, education levels, and who hold different vocations. The thirty women that I interviewed fell into broad

demographics. Approximately, one-third was in their late teens to late twenties, about one-third was in their early thirties through late fifties, and roughly one-third were over fifty years old. Education level varied, though my younger informants tended to all have college educations, or be currently attending college. Many of my oldest informants had finished primary school. My middle group between their thirties and fifties was mixed with some women having college educations and others not. The majority of my informants was stay-at-home mothers, but a few held jobs, or attended school. All of my informants were Jordanian citizens. All of my informants would fall into the middle class category, but there were some that were lower-middle class and some upper-middle class. All of my informants lived outside of the refugee camp, in various neighborhoods around Zarqa. I attempted to gain as many diverse opinions as possible with my research. I attended special events like weddings, visited other households for social calls, and participated in Iftar--the ritualized breaking of fasts during the holy month of Ramadan[2]. I found more informants through the connections that I made while participating in these previously mentioned activities. I utilized a broad range of recording techniques to gather data such as hand-written and typed field notes, audio recordings, as well as subsequent transcripts, and photographs of how informants dress and rituals they participate in.

While I was in Jordan, I had the opportunity to experience Ramadan, and participate in Ramadan by hosting and visiting other households in the evening, which allowed for some excellent participant-observation of the women's role in the household during Ramadan. I was in Jordan a month before Ramadan as well, during what is considered to be the wedding season. I had a few opportunities to attend weddings, which are usually gender-segregated events, and was able to watch and participate in them. These experiences allowed me to see the overall structure

[2] Ramadan is the holy month where Muslims fast from sunrise until sunset. This means that Muslims do not consume any food or drink during daylight hours. It is a time of penance, reflection, and charity.

of the events, and see the similarities and great variability that exist in these events. Both events will also help to elaborate on women's role not only in family life, but in the public sphere as well.

I conducted individual interviews to help gather data on what it means to be a Palestinian woman living as a refugee in Jordan according to my informants. The interviews were conducted mostly in Arabic. On a few rare occasions, the interview was done in English, but this only occurred with individuals fluent in English. Additionally, if the informant could not reply to their satisfaction in English, we would switch back to Arabic. My interviews focused on how women view their role in Palestinian society, their positions in their own households, and how they understood Palestinian culture. I also asked women a variety of questions about their daily life, about how they perceive their role in Palestinian society, and what they believe is expected of them.

I analyzed my field notes and transcripts for common themes. I typed up the transcripts from interviews. I translated everything from Arabic to English[3]. I started using open coding in about the first third of my interviews, and did line by line analysis in those transcripts. In the rest of my transcripts, I utilized focused coding. Additionally, I looked for specific themes that appeared frequently in the field notes and transcripts that relate to the Palestinian collective narrative, Palestinian national identity, and what it means to be a Palestinian woman living in Jordan. The most prevalent themes related to family, marriage, the Palestinian collective narrative, expressions of Palestinian identity, religion, and discrimination. Family and marriage were very important to establish claims to historic Palestine, and thus claim a Palestinian heritage. The Palestinian collective narrative was used whenever women discussed stories of

[3] Thanks goes to my amazing and patient husband, Mohammad Ghnem, for helping with the translations. He helped speed the process up, and whenever I was stuck.

Palestine. Expressions of Palestinian identity are things discussed or performed that relate to an individual's Palestinian heritage, and can be done both consciously or unconsciously. Religion often dealt with how women talked about their religion, or specific rituals that were performed, like iftar meals. Discrimination was a common topic and talked about frequently, and usually related to why Palestinians should be allowed to return to Palestine. I will elaborate more in the following chapters, about how all of these are further interconnected.

Since my research examines being a refugee as a gendered experience, primarily focusing on women's experiences, it focuses on how Palestinian women formulate and utilize agency in the intersecting spheres of the Palestinian collective narrative and Palestinian national identity. This research questions previous assumptions about women's roles in the cultural institutions of the Palestinian collective narrative and the creation and re-creation of the Palestinian national identity. This research will help break down stereotypes about the lack of women's agency in daily life. I breakdown these stereotypes by examining women's participation in the Palestinian collective narrative through their daily activities. These women's activities and participation in the collective narrative serve to reinforce Palestinian national identity. It is necessary to have a better understanding of the construction of Palestinian national identity due to the current political climate of the Middle East. Palestinians living as refugees in various countries throughout the Middle East have an impact on each individual country's politics, economies, and other sectors, in addition to influencing global politics.

Palestinian women refugees who live in Jordan understand their roles as Palestinians and embody Palestinian national identity through actions that are shaped by the Palestinian collective narrative. I focus upon some of the actions that relate to daily life, Ramadan gatherings, and weddings. My research will, furthermore, examine the gender dynamics that play a large part in

Palestinian society, the expression of national identity amongst Palestinian women, and the way being a displaced people impacts identity formation. I will do this by bringing together information about family life, expectations of women, daily activities, political activism, kinship, and social and religious rituals to better understand these connections. In my first chapter, I will show women's expression of the Palestinian identity through self-identification, family and kinship ties, and marriage rituals. This allows for study in the way Palestinian identity is expressed in daily life, through unconscious choices of my informants. Many of the ways, that women show they are Palestinian are through enculturated ideas and practices that they use daily. My second chapter focuses on the role that the Palestinian collective narrative plays in helping to cement a formal Palestinian identity through mindful efforts made by my informants. The way the women connect and relate to other women through the Palestinian collective narrative is largely a conscious effort, and serves to build ties with other Palestinians. Women actively use the collective narrative to create strong bonds of comradery with other women who also identify as Palestinian, and share in the collective narrative. My third chapter examines the role that gender plays in their daily life, and how it impacts their experiences and expressions of Palestinian identity. However, I acknowledge that gender is not the only aspect of my female's informants' identity that influences their expression. In the conclusion, I explain how all of these key components, Palestinian identity, the collective narrative, and gender, influence one another. By explaining these inter-related components, it allows us to better understand Palestinian society as a whole.

CHAPTER 2: PALESTINIAN-NESS

The way people refer to themselves and how others refer to them is an important part of formulating identity and belonging. All of the women I interviewed identified themselves as Palestinian. Others in the community identified them as Palestinian, even though many of their government documents, such as driver's licenses and passports would list their nationality as Jordanian. These Palestinian women noted that they were distinct from Jordanians. How Palestinian women view themselves is important to understanding who is seen as Palestinian, and how Palestinians show their national identity. How people demonstrate they are Palestinian relates to the Palestinian collective narrative. This demonstration includes how my informants talk about their heritage and identity, and is partially encapsulated in the dialogue commonly used in the collective narrative. The main questions examined here are: What does it mean for my informants to be a Palestinian woman? In what ways do Palestinian women show that they are Palestinian? For my informants they live Palestinian-ness on a daily basis. So I address, what do Palestinian women do daily? Additionally, certain rituals embody specific Palestinian traditions. So, what makes Palestinian weddings unique? How do all these things encompass how Palestinian women view themselves? How do all these things affect how others view Palestinian women? These are some of the questions I wanted to answer when starting my research. I wanted to understand the way in which women relate to and express their Palestinian identity on a daily basis through various mechanisms and institutions that exist in their society.

Women demonstrate and explain what makes them Palestinian through self-identification, daily activities, and rituals, like weddings. Often times, my informants would speak of their nationality and identity with conflicting narratives. When participating in weddings, while there were globalized aspects that were easily identifiable, such as the wearing

of a white dress, there are also aspects that are specific to Palestinians only. In discussing and participating in daily activities, there are certain societal expectations that all Palestinian women must adhere to, or risk breaking expected gender norms. Each of these points are discussed and examined throughout the rest of this chapter.

Complexity in Palestinian Identity and Recognized Citizenship:

The best way to describe Palestinian women living in Jordan is to define the complexity in which they exist, particularly when discussing these women's national identity and their legally recognized citizenship. My informants self-identify as Palestinians, but their documented citizenship as Jordanian makes this a much more complex situation. Citizenship is the legally recognized and documentable proof that a person resides and has rights within a particular country (Joseph 2000). National identity is the identification with or sense of belonging to a particular nation or state, with an understanding that the nation can be built upon a sense of "community" or "comradery" (Anderson 2006). Thus Palestinian national identity is a group of people who share a common belonging to historic/mandate Palestine. The Palestinian national identity is situated around an independent Palestine, or the desire for it. Citizenship for this paper, is the legal recognition of belonging to a country that is documented through appropriate documents. All of my informants held Jordanian citizenship, and had those documents. two of my informants held these documents for the Occupied Territories, which are called the huweya. Most of my informants did not have these documents, but desperately wanted them. I found a wide range of how women self-identified, and it ranged from denying their Palestinian identity even though they had a huweya, to fully embracing it even though they were born in a completely different country. Some Palestinian refugees do have Palestinian Authority

documents, commonly referred to as the huweya. A huweya is a travel document, and it refers to a state sponsored identity card that allows Palestinians to travel in and around the Occupied Territories. For this thesis, I use the term huweya to refer to the travel documents from either West Bank or Gaza. Many Palestinians do not have a huweya from either West Bank or Gaza because when fleeing the various conflicts, many personal items were lost or left behind. This often included important documents that would aid them in securing the huweya even though they were living aboard. Twenty-eight out of thirty-one interviewees did not possess a huweya. The women that I spoke with, the majority of them, who did not have a huweya desperately wanted one and wanted to visit Palestine or the Occupied Territories. While it is possible for Palestinians to receive a travel visa from Israel to cross the border and travel in the Occupied Territories, and on very rare occasions to Jerusalem, it is extremely difficult and rare for Palestinians to actually be approved for the visa. One of the few guaranteed ways to travel to at least the Occupied Territories is to carry and maintain a huweya. Of the few that had a huweya, the majority of women were happy to have it, but I had one informant who puzzled me because she was apathetic towards visiting either Palestine or the Occupied Territories.

There is a clear range of responses that are proposed by various informants when they self-identify, or do not identify as Palestinian. For this section, I will start with the most unusual, which was explicitly telling other individuals that an individual is Jordanian, and denying ties to Palestine. Um Mohammad was an older woman who had left Gaza during the Six Day War in 1967. She told me, "Yes, I tell everyone I'm from Jordan. Because my son was born here, I am Jordanian now. Even though I was born in Gaza, it's just in a name. I am still Palestinian, but I stopped paying attention to what is happening in Palestine, and I am pretty much Jordanian now. We have houses and properties in Palestine, but we settled in Jordan. I am not denying that I am

Palestinian, but now I live here in Jordan...I have a passport, I have insurance, all my documents say that I'm Jordanian," (Melendy 5/29/13). She insisted that she was Jordanian because her children were born in Jordan, her husband's family lived in Jordan, and most of her family resided there as well. She was unique because she was one of a few who had a huweya, could travel to Gaza, yet she complained, "Yes, the first time I got it, it was good for ten years. Now it is only good for five years," (Melendy, Um Mohammad 5/29/13). However, when asked if she would return for visits, or return to live there, Um Mohammad informed me directly, "Here is better because back in Palestine we are limited. Everyone is scared in Palestine. There is limited freedom there [Palestine] than here [Jordan]...I don't want to go back. They will give me a visa whenever I want, but I don't want to go back now. It has been 15 years since I last visited Palestine. I could if I wanted, but I don't want to because my family and home are here. I am comfortable here," (Melendy, 5/29/13). She was the rarity of my interviewees, as she was the only one that was so adamant about remaining in Jordan and claiming a Jordanian identity.

Um Mohammad illustrates that not all Palestinian women have a strong desire to return to Palestine. Her view is based on her life experiences of living as a child in a region in conflict. Um Mohammad viewed Jordan as extremely peaceful, and that influenced her strong desire to live there. She felt oppressed in Gaza when she lived there, and thus when in Jordan, by being given citizenship and rights, she felt she acquired more freedom there than she ever had in her own homeland. Um Mohammad felt that she owed her allegiance then to her new homeland, Jordan, the country that took her in and opened many doors for her and her family. She downplayed her Palestinian heritage and ties throughout the interview. She spoke highly of Jordan and always emphasized the peace and equality, which she felt the Jordanian government and Jordanian people had offered her and her family. Most of my informants did not share this

view though.

Many of my informants spoke of how they held Jordanian citizenship, and they felt grateful to Jordan for providing for them in their time of need. However, most were obviously more passionate about their ties to Palestine than the country within which they lived. As an example, another clear point on the spectrum of self-identification was self-identification as a refugee, legal standing as a Jordanian citizen, but community recognition of refugee status. Another of my interviewees was Um Ahed, who was middle-aged and came with her family to Jordan during the first intifada. She was assertive in her views as well, but when it came to claiming a national identity, she flip-flopped stating, "I have lived in Jordan for a long time, so I usually say I am Jordanian. But people they know I'm from Palestine. I got married here and I have kids here. It is a great honor to be a Palestinian woman, and everyone in Jordan knows that," (Melendy, Um Ahed 5/29/13). She was emphatic that she was not a refugee early on in the interview, "I am not a refugee, I am Nazaheen...Alhamdulillah[4], we are comfortable here. We went to school here, we like it here, everything is good here," (Melendy, Um Ahed 5/29/13). Um Ahed specifically used a special word to describe her position as a Palestinian living in Jordan. Nazaheen is extremely difficult to translate in this context, as the term itself means displaced. It typically refers to individuals who fled from Palestine in 1948, but Um Ahed and her family fled in the late 1980's during the First Intifada. Her use of "nazaheen" could also be in reference to her family's internal displacement from historical Palestine to one of the Occupied Territories. When I pressed to try to get her to explain the difference better she herself had trouble expressing the difference. In fact, later on she referred to herself and other Palestinians as refugees using the term "al-l'aageen". Her later use of "al-l'aageen" is interesting because this is translates to mean refugees who are fleeing conflict, or forced to flee their homes. While Um

[4] Alhamdulillah is Arabic for "Thanks to God" or "Thank God".

Ahed attempts to make a sharp distinction between her situation and other refugee situations, it is obviously a complicated understanding since she herself uses differing ways to self-identify as Palestinian refugee. Additionally, Um Ahed was one of many of my informants that did not have a huweya. She complained, "I wish I could go back and start over with everything. We have to get a visa with our Jordanian alien number from Israel. I wish I could go and visit home. It's not that I can't, but you have to get the visa to get in. I wish I could go back...Ya'arb[5], W'allah[6], Ya'arb, we could get our home back and live there," (Melendy, Um Ahed 5/29/13). She longed to return to Palestine, and spoke of her family and friends that still lived back in West Bank. Um Ahed was passionate about Palestine, and impressed upon me the importance of Palestinians' desires to have their own state, recognized by the international community.

Um Ahed spoke with ardor when discussing her homeland, and the situation that many Palestinians face. She voiced the clear contradictions that many of the informants felt. She claimed Jordanian citizenship, but still felt deep ties to Palestine. She spoke with longing when talking about going back to her home in Palestine. While she did not directly state that not having a huweya was problematic, the way she talked about getting a visa from the Israeli embassy made it seem like an impossible task. For many Palestinians, they face discrimination when they wish to travel. Acquiring a visa to travel to the Occupied Territories is very difficult for Palestinians. It is very common for them to apply, pay a lot of money for the visa, and in the end be denied the visa. Many Palestinians believe this is open discrimination from Israelis towards Palestinians. It is a way to limit their access to friends, family, and resources that they may have legal rights to back in Palestine, or in the Occupied Territories. Um Ahed felt hopeless that she would ever return to her homeland. She wanted to return so desperately, but she

[5] Ya'arb is Arabic meaning "I hope".
[6] W'allah is Arabic meaning "I swear to God".

despaired because she lacked the huweya. She was one of many of my informants who felt this way. Um Ahed in this instance is archetypical Palestinian refugee, who feels gratitude to the country who took her in, but still has a strong desire to see her homeland again.

Hajja Zeina was another who hoped and prayed for the return of her homeland, but she claimed her national identity differently than Um Ahed. Hajja Zeina was a young girl when she and her family fled from Gaza during the Six Day War. Indeed, she insisted on telling me the story of her frantic flight into exile even before answering any of my questions. However, when she did, Hajja Zeina explained, "I'm Palestinian, but I live in Jordan. Y'anny[7], Jordan gives me from her goods."

I asked, "So do you consider yourself Jordanian?"

Hajja Zeina replied, "No, I consider myself Palestinian-Jordanian."

"Do you show the people you are Palestinian or Jordanian?" I queried.

"I show them I'm both Palestinian and Jordanian. I am so proud to be Palestinian, but I would love to go back to Palestine to die there. I feel so proud. It is the best thing. I would love to go back and live in our houses with our family when it is safe, among your neighbors and family. You always feel different if you are in your own country. In Jordan, you feel like you're renting a house. You never own it" (Melendy, Hajja Zeina 7/10/13). This is the only time I heard this analogy, but by far, it is an interesting description of how people can feel living as refugees in another country. For her, being a refugee meant being an outsider, even though she would claim both Palestinian and Jordanian nationality. However, Hajja Zeina was another informant who did not have a huweya and said as much, "No, I don't have it at all. Since I left, I couldn't go back. If we lived in Palestine, we could use our land and not live close to one another. But here in Jordan we have to live very close to one another because we don't have land and we have

[7] Y'anny is Arabic and literally translates to "I mean", but is more often used as a filler word like "um".

to buy it. Also we have to keep close and stick with one another," (Melendy, 7/10/13). Hajja Zeina was the first woman to give me a reason why Palestinians live together in neighborhoods in Jordan. Palestinians who had Jordanian citizenship could move wherever they chose in the country, but her explanation as to why Palestinians should and often do live close to one another was shared connections and expense of housing.

Hajja Zeina viewed herself as belonging to two countries and having enough love for both, or so she claimed. However, you could tell that she valued Palestine more than Jordan. Hajja Zeina spoke of the beauty of Palestine, and her hope to return there. She felt loyalty to both Jordan and Palestine, but her primary loyalty would always be to Palestine. That is clear when she compares living in Jordan to living in a rented house. Hajja Zeina lacked the Palestinian huweya, but that did not stop her from wishing to return to the land where she was born. She obviously held fond memories of Gaza by the way she spoke of returning. Her argument as to why Palestinians live close to one another in Jordan was interesting. She is the only woman who suggested that Palestinians live close together because they have to buy their land, not inherit their family's land that have been in their family for many generations, like they would have back in Palestine. Often purchasing land is difficult to do because of the expense. In Palestine, the land was the tangible thing that exemplified familial bonds, but in Jordan they do not have that, so Palestinians live close together in neighborhoods. She also implies that they have to stick together because they are Palestinians. They are Palestinians who are living not on their own familial lands, and therefore, their shared identity is now the thing that ties them all together.

The range in which Palestinians self-identify as is important in understanding the different ways that these women view themselves. I have only provided examples of the most

common ways of self-identification amongst Palestinians as expressed by my informants, but self-identification truly is a spectrum. While a few of my informants denied being refugees all together, others embraced the term. Some tried to find a middle ground between being referred to as a refugee, acknowledging their Jordanian citizenry, as a way to explain how they viewed their position. Um Zeid was in her early thirties, and had children. She was born and raised in Jordan, and had never been to Palestine. She said, "I'm not exactly a refugee. It's just something that happened and we have no power in changing it" (Melendy, Um Zeid 6/10/13). However, Um Zeid emphasized, "No Palestinian woman would every consider herself Jordanian," (Melendy, 6/10/13). She considered herself Palestinian and maintained that to be her national identity regardless of where she was born. She was Palestinian because her family was Palestinian. However, Um Zeid viewed her refugee status as something imposed upon her, and she felt as if she had little agency to change her refugee status. She lacked a huweya and said as much, "No, I've never visited, and I don't have the huweya. Of course I would go to Palestine if I had the chance," (Melendy, Um Zeid 6/10/13). Um Zeid desired to travel to her homeland, but felt that she would not have that opportunity.

For Um Zeid, she had never seen Palestine, but that did not diminish her longing to visit Palestine. It did not change her mind that she felt that she was Palestinian. Um Zeid viewed herself not quite as a refugee, and yet not a full Jordanian either, while still facing the same plight that her parents and grandparents had faced. She still maintained a strong emotional connection to Palestine, and particularly to the land. Um Zeid viewed her position to be influenced more by fate or other powers in place, than by her own actions. She disavowed her agency when talking about the position of Palestinians born abroad embody by stating, "We have no power in changing it" (Melendy, Um Zeid 6/10/13). Yet, these foreign-born Palestinians

claim their Palestinian heritage as part of their identity. That in and of itself is a way to resist established legal categories that limit the ability of Palestinians, such as non-recognition of a separate, sovereign Palestinian state, or non-recognition of my informants' Palestinian citizenship. Part of that identity is the desire to return to her ancestral lands that are no longer in her family's control. For Um Zeid, the contradiction she embodies is that she was not even born, and never saw Palestine, but she feels drawn to it. Additionally, she anchors a part of her identity to the idea that Palestine is her homeland, and that she has a right as a Palestinian to return there.

There are various ways to self-identify with Palestine and claim a Palestinian identity, and these presented are just a few examples of a never-ending spectrum of what my informants expressed to me during my time in Jordan. Though my interviewees were living in one country, they felt a larger obligation fighting for, building, and preserving of another state that is unrecognized by the international community. Palestine is not acknowledged as existing by several countries, yet it exists in the hearts and minds of the people who identify as Palestinian. While it is not uncommon for individuals to maintain citizenship to more than one country, Palestinian refugees do not have the opportunity to hold citizenship to their homeland due to the current state of the politics. Those that hold citizenship of another country, complicate the issue of refugee status. While the United Nations recognize that they are refugees, and they themselves claim refugee status; often times other governments will not recognize their refugee status, and instead argue that they are not refugees because they hold citizenship to another country. It makes the situation complicated for Palestinian refugees. Palestine is the homeland that is embodied within the Palestinian collective narrative, and it is tangible to Palestinians, even though the physical country and territory is heavily disputed by other world powers.

The sharp distinction of explicit, documented citizenship and the lack of documentation proving a direct tie to Palestine are important. It encapsulates the idea that Palestinians lost their land and almost everything else that tied them to the land. However, Palestinians share an emotional attachment to Palestine. The women who wish to return, and who spoke so passionately about their homes back in Palestine show this idea of loss. That emotional tie is so powerful that it is cultivated in children, like Um Zeid who in turn raise their children to feel so strongly about a land they may never even get to visit. Therefore, legal citizenship is de-emphasized, while Palestinian heritage, family, and historical ties are emphasized as to what makes a woman Palestinian.

The Role of Family and Claiming Palestinian Nationality:

Generally, in the Middle East, a person's ethnic heritage is passed on through the father's lineage, or through patrilineally. Therefore, Palestinian nationality is handed down through the family, and particularly the father's family. However, the mothers, sisters, aunts, and grandmothers, who share their stories and cultural knowledge with children, directly impact how individuals grow up to view themselves as being part of a particular national identity. This sharing of cultural knowledge is part of societal expectations placed upon women as being the caretakers for children. Most of my informants were stay-at-home mothers, and caretakers of the home. Through sharing their knowledge and stories with their children, women are important to the daily formation of national identity.

The family is a central part of Palestinian life. Family is always involved in day-to-day activities, and not only close family, but often extended family, too. The family is an inclusive unit that helps the individual and guides them in their actions and decisions in all aspects of their

life. It is easily asserted that Palestinians are very family oriented. All of my interviewees talked about their families, and many discussed how they felt it was important to pass on their wisdom and knowledge to younger generations of Palestinian youth. This is exemplified best by one of my middle-age informants and a stay-at-home mom, Um Zeid, when she explained to me, "[We] have to explain to our children why we do not live in our home country. We have to explain why we are refugees here in Jordan. So, we have more duties than the Jordanian women because they don't have to explain all these things," (Melendy, 6/10/13). She viewed explaining the Palestinian plight to her children as a duty that she as a mother must fulfill. This expression of the necessity of it shows not only how important this is held in Palestinian society, but Um Zeid goes further and explicitly compares Palestinian women with Jordanian women, and says that because Jordanians do not have to explain to their children about their homeland, that they have fewer duties to fulfill.

The role of the Palestinian mother plays within the context of family, as an educator for her children is a common one. This sentiment is echoed by Hajja Zeina,

> "Palestinian and Jordanian women have their own cultures and she [the mother] should pass this on to her kids. For example, the clothing that Palestinian women used to wear, the Palestinian woman should pass it to their daughters. But many do not stick to that tradition. It's not just the Palestinian kids, but Jordanian kids too, they don't stick with it. There is a difference because they have to teach their kids their own traditions." (Melendy, 7/10/13).

For Hajja Zeina, passing on traditions is important, but she felt that globalization has impacted youth through changing expectations of dress and clothing. Hajja Zeina's specific example of traditional clothing, like the thobe (traditional, embroidered Palestinian woman's dress) is interesting, but helps to exemplify the way that media and globalization has influenced youth around the world. She points out that it is not just Palestinian youth influenced by globalization, but Jordanian children as well. However, she feels that it is a mother's role to educate her

children about Palestinian traditions, clothing, and so forth. The mother is the one expected to teach her children about their Palestinian identity.

For some other of my informants, they talked more generally about this topic, and felt that mothers were unified globally by their shared motherhood. I had a few women who felt this way, as Um Ahed said, "No, we are all the same, we are all mothers," (Melendy, 5/29/13). Another informant, Um Mohammad said the exact same thing almost word for word, "As a Jordanian mom and Palestinian mom, we are the same. We both have kids and raise them to be good kids," (Melendy, Um Ahed 5/29/13). For these women, all women who are mothers have shared responsibilities of raising their children to the best of their ability. These women valued tradition and family and felt that it weighed heavily on an individual's actions. However, it was not only mothers and older informants, who felt this way.

Family was an important formulating factor for many of my younger informants as well. My best example is Hazar. She had her Masters degree, and at twenty-three years old was still living at home with her family. She was an active and outgoing individual, with whom I developed a strong friendship. Hazar had a book that her grandmother had started, and it had been handed down through the women in her family for generations from her aunt to her mother, and finally to her. It held newspaper articles, obituaries of martyrs[8], poems, stories, drawings, and the collective creative works of the women of her family. This was a treasured family heirloom that had survived her family's flight from Palestine to Jordan years earlier, and she continued to add to the book. Family was central to her formulation of her self-identity. Hazar had been born in Jordan, as had her brothers. However, her mother and father were both from the West Bank, close to Nabulus, originally. It was her family telling her about her Palestinian

[8] Martyrs in this context, refers to Palestinians who have been killed by Israeli Defense Forces. Often times during times of violent classes, but not always. These individuals are recognized by the larger Palestinian population to have been as people struggling against the oppression imposed on Palestinians by the government of Israel.

heritage and reinforcing her Palestinian national identity, and encouraging her to claim it. Hazar was an activist, as well as a student. She worked in her local community to promote Palestinian solidarity projects, and helped to organize events and protests. Her parents supported this, and helped Hazar with her endeavors. She said, "We must be connected. We must take care of each other here. We must represent our culture and our country, Palestine, wherever we go," (Melendy, Hazar 7/7/13). Hazar took the idea of family and expanded it, by encouraging other Palestinians to claim their Palestinian national identity, and advocated for all Palestinians to show their national pride. She saw being Palestinian as a blessing and something to be celebrated, and that community should be built around Palestinian national identity. However, this was not the case for all of my informants.

Several of my informants spoke of how they lost connections to family and friends who stayed back in Palestine, while they were forced to live abroad as a refugee in exile from their homeland. Um Ahed expressed a deep sense of loss by saying, "Honestly, it's really hard not to see your kids, your relatives, your brothers. As much as Jordan is really good and we are like family, but we always have a home [in Palestine]," (Melendy, 5/29/13). For her, the loss was tangible because she was unable to return to where she was born, or to see family and friends who remained in the Occupied Territories. She had lost connections to friends and family by living as a refugee in Jordan. She like others acknowledged gratitude towards Jordan for taking her in as a refugee. However, Um Ahed expresses emotional ties to Palestine by asserting that she will always consider it to be her home, not Jordan, even though she currently resides there. As is shown, she has a specific way of claiming her Palestinian identity, which is done by claiming familial ties to Palestine, de-emphasizing her physical and legal ties to Jordan, and asserting an emotional and psychological bond to Palestine that is rooted in consanguineal

relationships.

This is an intricate relationship between the desire for Palestinian refugees to develop new connections while sharing their pride in their Palestinian heritage, and the sense of shared loss that many Palestinians feel when talking about being forced to live as refugees abroad, both of which serve to unite Palestinian refugees. However, it is my informants, when talking about living as refugees, focused more on connections with family and friends, and the importance of those relationships. These discussions show that the role of family and friends takes on an additional dimension for Palestinian refugees; whether it is through developing a new sense of community away from their homeland, as Hazar explains, or as the tangible loss of connections with communities back in Palestine, as discussed by Um Ahed. We see that these complex relationships between family heritage and expression of Palestinian identity as a way to help to solidify one's own personal identity, and help to bolster it regardless of whether or not it is associated to in a positive or negative manner. These relations formulate a foundation upon which the refugee builds their sense of claimed Palestinian identity in regards to those people with whom they feel closest. Thus, the refugee needs these connections in order to support their ties to Palestine. In addition to consanguineal relationships, another way in which a sense of community and inter-connectedness is built is through marriage and association with affinal relatives.

Identity and Marriage:

It is a social expectation that children remain in their parents' household until they are married, regardless of their age. This was common for all of my young Palestinian female informants who were unmarried at the time of our interviews. Several of my younger informants

like, Hazar, Suha, and Isaf, like most Palestinian youth, all live with their families and will do so until they get married. This is a social expectation of both young men and women dictated by Palestinian cultural and religious norms. One question continually asked by Westerners is, how are these youth supposed to date or find a mate of their own? In fact, there are a few ways that Palestinian youth find spouses. Some of these ways are prescribed in tradition and religion, with others has been influenced strongly by globalization.

The first would be arranged marriages by the family, and usually to a cousin. I asked a series of questions in relation to marriage because of the stark difference between Palestinians and Americans in regards to incest taboos. Incest taboos are socially defined rules of who an individual is allowed to marry. In the United States, cousin marriage defined as marrying an individual's first or second cousin, is socially reprimanded, and in most states is outright illegal. Amongst Palestinians, this is not the case, as it is actually encouraged by many of the older generations of Palestinian refugees residing in Jordan, and I found it to be quite common amongst many of my informants. When asked about these arranged marriages many of my informants explained not only the process, but also how women typically felt about it. Um Zeid explained, "Here in our religion, the prophet said to marry outside of the family, but we can still marry within our family. Also, it is up to the girl too, if she wants to or not," (Melendy, 6/10/13). She continued, "Yes, we marry our cousins here and it's ok," (Melendy, Um Zeid 6/10/13). When asked if this was preferred over other marriages, she was emphatic, "No, no one forces us to marry our cousins," (Melendy, Um Zeid 6/10/13). She felt coerced, arranged cross-cousin marriage was a common misconception that many foreigners held about all Muslims, she explained later on in our discussion. Um Zeid wanted to make it clear that both religion and Palestinian culture emphasized that the youth have a say in their marriages in order to dispel this

mistaken belief. Um Naser when asked about arranged marriage and marriages with cousins explained that the man chosen, "will take care of her, and her honor is his honor. He would protect her," (Melendy, 6/10/13). Yet another of my informants felt it necessary to point out that it was not just Palestinians who engaged in this practice, and elaborated as to why. Hajja Zeina said, "Many Palestinian women do this, but it's not just Palestine. They do it in Jordan too. But the woman has the choice. It's up to her. If she marries her cousin, here it's like she's not leaving the family. We know him better, and we trust them. That's why we give them the cousins because it's better. We trust them a lot," (Melendy, 6/10/13). For these women an arranged cross-cousin marriage meant safety for the women, who were being married off. Um Mohammad voiced this clearly, "I prefer her cousin to marry her because he will take care of her. Her cousin would never let anyone talk badly about her. If she wants her cousin, she can marry him, and if she wants someone else, she can marry him. I don't care," (Melendy, 5/29/13). However, as many of the women pointed out that it was ultimately up to the woman. The majority of my informants who were married or engaged were to cousins. Um Mohammad said, "My husband is my cousin. We have been married thirty-five years. I don't have any problems and my sons are healthy and good," (Melendy, 5/29/13). One reason to suspect that there are limited health problems in these cross-cousin, arranged marriages is largely due to Jordanian laws that have been put in place. One of the requirements for individuals getting married is that they must have a series of blood tests run in order to ensure that neither parent has any sexually transmitted diseases, and to additionally check that both parents are not carries for several genetic disorders, like Sickle Cell Disease (Alswaidi & O'Brien, 2009). The combination of medical knowledge used, and the firm belief that the man is part of the family, and therefore beholden to it, makes arranged cross-cousin marriages ideal for Palestinian women from the

family's perspective.

However, many of my informants felt that arranged marriages and cross-cousin marriages were falling out of style, especially amongst the youth. Um Naser told me, "The women now are educated, and there are many ways to meet boys. The mixing, she can meet boys at university and market over social media, and she can choose what she wants. Not like in the old days," (Melendy, 6/10/13). Hajja Zeina agreed with her, "No, that was in the old days. Now they are educated, they mix a lot, so she doesn't have to marry her cousin," (Melendy, 6/10/13). When asked when do Palestinian women have the opportunity to mix, she says, "By colleges and by mixing, and by going to the market," (Melendy, Hajja Zeina 6/10/13). Many of my informants agreed with these assessments. However, some said like Um Mohammad had pointed out, that they would prefer the cross-cousin, arranged marriage.

The preference for cross-cousin and arranged marriages is something that is clearly generational. Usually girls' mothers would suggest it. They felt that this was a better way to protect their daughters because the family would hold more sway over a cousin, than an outsider. Young women, however, held mixed opinions. While most young women I spoke with were not extremely opposed to an arranged marriage, or marrying their cousin, most preferred to meet someone outside of the family. Usually, these girls had seen boys at college that they liked, and wished to pursue them over boys with direct familial ties.

When discussing marriage with some of my younger informants between late teens and late twenties, I heard a variety of answers about what was ideal for each individual girl. Safiya said, "I want to marry my cousin, and I know most girls now don't want to. But I think he is very handsome and he is very nice." Another girl, Yasmeen, who had completed college, but was looking for a job before she got married, said, "I don't like any of my cousins really, but my

family has suggested I marry in the family. They say that he will be better, but I want to marry someone I love. My brother has a really cute friend, and we went to college together. I don't know him...we didn't talk, but I would rather not marry any of my cousins." These are examples of the two camps that young women tend to fall in. The ones that are willing and happy to marry their cousins and others who choose to break tradition and marry someone for love. Either camp faces the reality that their family must approve of their choice for a spouse regardless if the groom is a relation, or just a friend. There are still strong pressures placed on girls to marry Palestinian men, regardless of what many of the older women say.

Some of my young and unmarried informants revealed to me that while there are social expectations that they are not to talk to or interact with men who may be potential marriage partners, they engaged in this illicit behavior. In fact, this behavior resulted in at least two of my informants becoming engaged with the man while I was in Jordan, or just after I left the country. Not because their families found out, but because they believed that they would be a good couple, and had "fallen in love." Additionally, a few of my informants expressed that their families were more understanding of a more globalized Jordan, and encouraged their daughters to remain chaste, but saw it perfectly acceptable for them to talk and interact with other men. Hazar was one of these women, "My family doesn't care. I work with men, and most of my office is men. I have male friends, and they respect me just fine. It's not like in the old days," (Melendy, 7/7/13). Hazar voices what many women in Jordan are seeing on a daily basis. Globalization and ideas of mixing of the sexes are clearly relaxing. Part of this is most likely due to education, especially co-education at universities.

Youth attending university is supported by the strong emphasis that families place upon their children receiving an education, the vast majority of my informants had graduated high

school, and many had completed college. There is a strong social value placed upon education in Palestinian society. In fact, Um Ahed even said, "Just like America, we prefer the one who is a student," (Melendy, 5/29/13). Palestinians prefer that their children's spouses are educated, regardless of gender. Palestinians place high value upon education, and there is an extremely high social pressure for children to do well in school and attend college. In addition to the high emphasis on education, there are more women entering the work force to help provide for their families. These two factors are encouraging more Palestinian women to enter the public sphere of work, than even in the past generations. For example, while all of my younger informants had attended or were attending college, only about half of my middle-aged informants had attended college, and none of my oldest informants. This shows a shift over time of an emphasis placed upon education for Palestinians. However, these are not the only factors that have an impact on marriage among Palestinians.

Ethnic identity is extremely important when marrying. This is due to ethnic heritage being passed down patrilineally. Therefore, I found an interesting spectrum of opinions on what ethnicities are acceptable marriage partners, when talking to women of various ages and education levels. When informants were asked, "Would you or your children marry anyone of a different nationality, like Jordanian, Saudi, or just Palestinians?" For the majority of my informants, most said they would prefer if their child married someone of Palestinian decent, but several said they did not care if they were Palestinian, just so long as they were Muslim. This presents an interesting split of positions for my informants, as some viewed ethnicity to be more important than religion, and others viewed it the opposite. Over all the preference for the majority of my informants, was that they or their children should marry a Palestinian. One informant, Um Zeid, replied, "I would choose just a Palestinian," (Melendy, 6/10/13). Another,

Um Mohammad stated, "I don't care if he Saudi, Jordanian, Kuwaiti, as long as I like him. If I like him and he is Palestinian...good. It is naseeb[9]," (Melendy, 5/29/13). Um Ahed agreed with Um Mohammad, and said, "Yes, it is naseeb to get married. As long as the man is good man and god fearing. It doesn't matter. He can be Syrian, Jordanian, Palestinian. As long as he is good, it is fine. If he Jordanian or Palestinian it is better. If not, probably not. Other Palestinians take Iraqis or whatever, but I prefer Jordanian or Palestinian," (Melendy, 5/29/13). However, Hazar, who was unmarried said, "No! Only a Palestinian! I would never marry anyone who wasn't Palestinian. Insha'Allah (God willing), I will marry one who has a huweya and can take me to Palestine," (Melendy, 7/7/13). Some said that only marrying a Palestinian would be best. Um Naser laughed, "No, in my personal opinion pick a Palestinian. My traditions would be similar to him, and he would understand each other. There won't be so many differences, and he would understand my accents," (Melendy, Um Naser 6/10/13). However, marriage to a Palestinian is not only a way to connect with other Palestinians, but also a way to gain access to the Occupied Territories. If an individual marries someone who has a huweya, then they can usually acquire one themselves based on the marriage. It can also be to limit the differences between spouses, as a way to limit tension inside the family and home-life. Marriage is expected of all Palestinian women, and those who do not get married are a rarity in Palestinian society. The only time it is acceptable for a Palestinian woman to remain unmarried into her late twenties, is because she is completing higher education, but even then she faces pressure from her family, and other Palestinian women to "Hurry up and get married, so she isn't an old spinster." Marriage is a social expectation amongst Palestinians, and while it is not unique to them, who an individual marries and the associated rituals associated with the marriage party serve to reinforce

[9] Naseeb is an idiomatic expression that means, "Whatever fate decides". This term is commonly used by older Palestinian women to express their lack of agency in a situation.

Palestinian identity. Palestinian marriage parties are as varied as the women having them. I was able to attend a few weddings while I was in Jordan this summer, and even though it was not a statistically significant number, these weddings represented a decent amount of variety that Palestinian weddings embody. I also talked with a few of my unmarried informants about what they hope to do for their weddings. Each individual held their own ideas about the perfect wedding, much like American women, but there were commonalities among them.

There are certain traditions that Palestinians have with regards to weddings. The first would be the ritual of the groom traveling to the bride's home to pick her up for the wedding party. This task involves a caravan of cars of the groom's friends and family traveling to the bride's family's home. It is there, that the bride and groom get together in a car that is typically decorated with flowers and window paint, and drive to the venue hosting the wedding party. For example, the first wedding I attended with a couple of informants, Safiya, her mother, and her friend Al'a. To go to the party there were two buses rented to take guests from the groom's house, which was up the street from where I was staying to the party in downtown Zarqa. The buses were hot and cramped. We were sitting three people to a seat, and all the windows were wide open. Many women were wearing abaya[10] and hijab[11] and some were wearing niqab[12]. We traveled in a caravan following the groom's friends in a car in front of us. The men in the car were hanging out the windows shooting off a pistol and doing burnouts in the street. On the bus, there were popular love songs, and women were clapping and singing along. Everyone pushed to get off the cramped hot bus when we got to the wedding venue.

The wedding party itself can be held indoors or outside depending on the preferences of

[10] Abaya is the traditional black robe worn over women's clothes when they go out.
[11] Hijab is a headscarf to cover women's hair.
[12] Niqab is worn with hijab and covers the woman's face, except her eyes. It was not overly common amongst Palestinians living in Zarqa, but I did see it on occasion.

the bride and groom. At the first wedding the venue was very beautiful. It had multi-colored lights, large mirrors, and tables covered with golden-brown and burgundy table clothes. Wedding parties are almost always gender segregated events with women having their own space separate from the men. At the first wedding, there were many women of all different ages. There were also many young children, both boys and girls, in the room. Once all the women were inside and mostly seated, then the groom's sisters and young girls not wearing hijab lined up, and a venue worker gave them roman candles. The lights went out and someone turned on flashing Christmas lights, and the bride and groom entered through a side door. The married couple walked down the middle of the room through the women and girls holding the roman candles with music playing. Music is always played at the weddings, and there is a lot of dancing. The music and dances that are performed vary depending on the wedding, and at the first wedding the music played while the bride and groom entered, was a pop song that was congratulating the bride and groom, and hoping that their love for one another grows through the years. At another wedding party they had live singers. It was an all woman band and in-between songs they recited poetry. Two women played drums, there was a main singer and two back up singers, one of which was playing a hand drum. While modern Arabic music from all over the Middle East is usually played, my second examples shows that live music can also be used instead of a DJ. Another unique aspect of Palestinian weddings is there is almost always at least one or two songs of dabke played. Dabke is a traditional Middle Eastern line dance, where individuals join hands and dance in a circle with a specific step pattern. There are specific songs that are associated with this dance, many of which are uniquely Palestinian. A great example of this is the song, "Ali al-keffiyeh[13]" ("Raise Your Keffiyeh"), which is about historical

[13] Keffiyeh is the Palestinian dialect for square black and white checkered scarf that men traditionally wear. It is made from a square piece of cotton. Even though is worn most often by men, women do sometimes wear it as well.

Palestine[14].

There are additional, more globalized rituals and expectations associated with Palestinian weddings, such as photography. At each wedding I attended, the bride and groom took photos with a professional photographer up on a raised platform that holds a plush bench where the bride and groom can sit. During the first wedding party I attended, the bride loosened her ring on her right ring finger and then steepled her fingers, and the groom had to move the ring from her right hand to her left hand. The photographer took a flurry of photos to capture the moment. This little rite is symbolic and has luck connotations. The goal is to move the ring without separating the fingers, and symbolizes the strength of the marriage. As far as my research shows, I have only witnessed this rite done at Palestinian weddings, but it could occur in other Arab weddings as well.

Another globalized aspect of Palestinian weddings is a large, decorated wedding cake. At the first wedding, after all of the photos were taken, a large square eight-layer cake was brought in that had red and white flowers on it. The couple was given a sword with flowers and a Palestinian keffiyeh wrapped around the hilt to cut into the cake. The use of a sword to cut the cake, I have seen at both Jordanian and Palestinian weddings. However, the distinction of the Palestinian keffiyeh and the flowers used to decorate the weapon denote Palestinian identity.

Keffiyeh have different colors and patterns, which are often associated with specific countries, and are commonly used as symbols of national pride and nationalism for one's ethnic heritage. The Palestinian keffiyeh is black and white checked pattern, with large white checks and small black ones.

[14] "Ali al-keffiyeh" ("Raise Your Keffiyeh") is a traditional Palestinian wedding dabke song that has become very popular due to Mohammad Assaf from Gaza winning the TV series Arab Idol this past summer by singing it. The English translation of the lyrics are as follows: Raise your Keffiyeh/Raise it
Sing the Ataba and Mijana and enjoy it/Shake your shoulders tenderly/Jafra, Ataba and Diheya/And let guns contribute and make it more fun/Raise the flag in Ramallah and Mountains of fire [Nablus's nick name]/your proud head band is a symbol of grit and determination/The first bullet tells the story of the journey/When the time comes, we make what's up go down [an old Palestinian idiomatic expression]/Raise your Keffiyeh Raise it/Sing the Ataba and Mijana and enjoy it/We grew figs and olives in the orchard/We brought the wheat seeds and the lemon trees/When you call my country, we will be ready/Lighting the victory paths in the battle day/Raise your Keffiyeh Raise it/Sing the Ataba and Mijana and enjoy it

Another small rite associated with the wedding cake is when the bride and groom are each given a small piece of cake on two forks, and have to feed the cake to the other. This is similar to other traditions around the globe, but are distinctly reminiscent of weddings here in the United States where the bride and groom share a piece of cake. Unlike in many American weddings, the goal is not to smash the cake on the other person's face, but to genuinely share the cake together. It also serves the purpose of creating intimate space for the couple during the wedding photos, since public kissing and public displays of affection are socially frowned upon. Then the pair were given two glasses of cola, and had to cross arms and drink from the other's glass. Then they had to share one glass. This is symbolic of two lives becoming one, and is similar to American rituals, like unity candles, unity sand, and so forth. However, the use of the cake and soda as a way to create an intimate space for just the bride and groom, and used as a way to create intimate wedding photos is unique to Palestinian culture.

As I stated earlier, weddings typically are gender-segregated events with men being in one area, and women in another. This was true at all the weddings I attended. For my first example, after the photos and rituals the groom left the woman's party to head to the man's side. Another wedding I attended was different from the first one. This wedding I attended with Safiya and her sister. During the wedding, there were only women present almost the entire time. The groom only escorted the bride in and took a few pictures together, with the groom excusing himself shortly thereafter to go to the men's party. During the other wedding party, the husband was with the bride for a portion of the wedding party. At the first wedding, many women removed their hijab and began to dance. These women were not part of the groom's immediate family. However, at the second wedding there was a lot of dancing. This was mostly done by the bride's and the groom's families. While some others joined in on some popular

songs, it was not common to have many women on the dance floor at any time during this party. This is significant because it shows the deeper cultural gender expectations. The fact that not all women start dancing right away is one that is enculturated into children starting at a young age, when they are brought to wedding parties. It is not acceptable for a woman to dance in front of strange men, the exception to this is professional dancers who are paid for their services. Not only are there definitive cultural expectations that are engendered through the specific meanings that Palestinians give to them, but there are traditions and rituals that play a role in the expression of Palestinian identity.

Previously at other weddings, I had not seen girls approach the bride while she sat in her chair. Generally, the bride is meant to stay separate from other partygoers. This has to do with social expectations placed upon brides. The bride is not to be too excited or happy on her wedding day because she is leaving her family to live with her husband. This was explained to me by a few of my informants during a couple of the weddings. These are social expectations that Palestinian brides must adhere to, or they risk social repercussions, like gossip.

Another commonality amongst all the weddings was that the bride wore a very Westernized white wedding gown. While they would enter into the venue wearing a white cloak with a hood to cover her hair and upper body, they would always shed it once inside the women's section where other men could not see them. The white ball gown has come to be the typical wedding dress amongst Palestinians. Many women that I talked to at the weddings discussed if a dress was pretty enough, which was proportionally related to the puffiness of the skirt and the embellishments on the dress. What the women attending the wedding wear is extremely varied, with some wearing more Western dresses, and some donning either traditional Palestinian dresses, or more modern Islamic clothing. The Western dresses are like formal dresses here in

the United States. It is usually younger generations that wear these types of dresses to parties. Traditional Palestinian dresses, or thobe, are beautifully embroidered dresses and worn with headscarves. Thobe was most common amongst older generations, like fifty years and older. Islamic dress can be seen being worn by any woman of any age. It varies greatly, but generally speaking it incorporates well tailored, modern jelbab (overcoats worn over street clothes, which vary in length); embroidered, bedazzled abaya (floor length, typically black); and sometimes niqab (a face veil and scarf that only shows a woman's eyes, worn with an abaya). At the first wedding I attended, some examples of what women wore are as follows: One woman who wore a brown jelbab and niqab to the party, and wore underneath a turquoise pantsuit and a fake flower in her pinned up hair. The sisters of the bride wore similar knee length dresses - one in blue and one in red. The groom's mother wore a beautiful, grass green dress with sequins, and a bolero with long sleeves to cover her shoulders and arms. One of the groom's sisters had on a short red dress, and the other sister wore a hot pink one of similar length and style. All the girls had their hair professionally done and most wore their hair in fancy updos although the sister in red had a half up half down. All of the women involved with the wedding party wore heavy makeup. At another wedding, many of the women were wearing hijab and abaya. Except the family members of the bride and groom, who were all wearing dresses. The only other girls wearing dresses were young girls, who had not started wearing hijab. The party was Palestinian and Bosnian mixed, with the bride being Bosnian and the groom being Palestinian. Many of the Bosnians were also wearing the hijab. Several women at the party wore the niqab.

At yet another wedding, many women were wearing hijab and only about one-third, who were wearing dresses. Some were the traditional thobe. There was an older woman who had on a traditional thobe with red and pink embroidery on it, and she wore a hijab that had various

shades of green. There was a young woman who stood out because she was wearing a white dress that only had a little color on the top in the way of pink roses and green vines. She used a burgundy shawl on her shoulders. When I asked Safiya, "Are women allowed to wear white at weddings here?"

Safiya's eyes got wide, "No. No! Only little girls and children can wear white, otherwise it can be a big problem."

"Then why is she wearing white?"

"Maybe...I don't know, she might be like the bride's sister, or maybe the groom's sister. Most of the time people should not wear white," (Melendy, Safiya 6/27/13). Therefore, this incident was unique to this particular wedding. Typically wearing white to a wedding is highly frowned upon in Palestinian society. This is like the rule in the United States, that a woman should never wear a white or off-white dress to another woman's wedding under any circumstances. This behavior is a social faux pas, and can cause tension between the offender and the bride.

Generally speaking, the more fluffy and shiny the dresses are, the more beautiful the dresses were thought to be, with more plain dresses being considered less beautiful. This was almost universal amongst my informants except one. Hazar told me, "I want to wear a white dress, yes. But I want it to be thobe, you know the traditional Palestinian dress. I want embroidery on it, but I want it to be traditional embroidery," (Melendy, 7/7/13). Every other informant insisted upon a white ball gown, but Hazar's choice sounded to be quite elegant, as well as a statement about her national identity.

Marriage and wedding ceremonies in these examples help to formulate and reinforce a Palestinian national identity through music, dress, food, and social expectations. Most eligible

young women are expected to marry in their early twenties, or when they finish college. Brides wear white dresses to their weddings, and are expected to participate in the rituals associated with the wedding including dancing, exchange of food and drink with the groom, and an exchange of wedding rings, just to name a few. Young Palestinian women are expected to and encouraged to marry Palestinian men, usually a cross-cousin, but not always. Social expectations in regards to whom is acceptable to marry has changed over time due to globalization, and changing cultural expectations for women in Palestinian society. However, each of these serves a greater purpose and that is to reinforce Palestinian tradition and culture. Each of these expectations and rituals are taught to girls from a young age, which reinforces that they are a Palestinian tradition and something that women are expected to participate in as they grow up.

Conclusion:

Claiming to be Palestinian through self-identification, claiming Palestinian identity through familial ties, and marriage all serve to build a Palestinian identity, and helps individuals assert claims to Palestinian national identity. As I discussed previously, Palestinian national identity does not exist because there is a sovereign nation-state called Palestine, but rather Palestinian identity is created out of the shared idea that people who are descended from a population from an area, which historically was referred to as Palestine, and people still identify with Palestine. Additionally, this is supported by UNRWA's (2013) definition of who a Palestinian refugee is, and if individuals are eligible to claim Palestinian refugee status. This clearly relates closely to Smith's (1989) idea of "ethnic nationalism" that is based in rules of kinship both consanguineal and affinal. As with the claims that my informants made using

marriage and blood relations to make claims to Palestinian national identity.

The Palestinian women whom I have interviewed reside in the country of Jordan, and all of them maintain Jordanian citizenship, but the majority of informants identified more with Palestine than Jordan, when questioned. This fact alone implies that Gellner (1983) with his two separate distinctions for national identity - one form of national identity concerned with shared culture, and the other form associated with self-identification. The reality of Palestinian refugees national identity involves both types in use rather than just one form over the other. More often than not, my informants not only voluntarily self-identify as Palestinian, but they identified with other Palestinians and participated in shared culture, like the marriage traditions. While it is not the only identity that many of these women maintain, it does not erase the fact that they are also Jordanian citizens and are influenced by Jordanian culture. My informants had complicated identities based not only on their Palestinian heritage, their self-identification as Palestinian refugees, but their status as refugees, and their Jordanian citizenship. The women work to preserve and connect with other Palestinian women through this shared identity building a community that centers on recreating and reinforcing the Palestinian national identity through marriage, shared cultural norms, and supporting blood relatives' claims to Palestinian national identity.

The marriage rituals that women engage in must adhere to social expectations of other Palestinian women. While culture does change over time and with the influences of outside factors such as globalization, it is important to note that even those changes are brought in and develop their own specific meanings amongst Palestinians. An example of this would be the desire to wear white, ball gowns for weddings, which are distinctly Western, but have changed it with the use of white cloaks amongst Palestinian Muslim women. These dresses represent

modernization, but at the same time, Palestinians manage to modify the clothing to make it adhere to societal expectations of modesty. These rites and expectations are something that young, unmarried women talk and think about, usually with their peers, or in this case with a researcher. This is how ideas spread, and how globalized ideas, like marriage for love, or wearing Western wedding dresses become incorporated into society. Ultimately, it shows the impact that globalization, ritual, kinship, citizenship, and national identity can have on Palestinian women's lives. It shows several different ways that Palestinian women work to actively engage in a dialogue about what it means to be a Palestinian woman, and how they work every day to embody it. These are not the only factors that affect Palestinian women, and how they view their Palestinian identity. In the following section, I will address how the Palestinian collective narrative actively relates to the Palestinian identity, and how Palestinian women in Jordan engage with the collective narrative, and how it influences their lives.

CHAPTER 3: THE ROLE OF THE PALESTINIAN COLLECTIVE NARRATIVE

The Palestinian collective narrative is interwoven with Palestinian national identity. It is necessary to understand the interplay between these constructs. I will illustrate how the Palestinian collective narrative and Palestinian national identity are inter-related, and serve to inform one another. My informants, many of whom did not have documents to prove their ties to Palestine, claimed Palestinian nationality through blood ties, and recognition by UNWRA. These Palestinian women also engaged with the Palestinian collective narrative. I define the collective narrative as or in the stories that Palestinian refugees tell about Palestine as their homeland, and while most stories being about the Nakbah, and the continuing occupation of Palestinian lands, which encompass many emotions like loss, suffering, dislocation, and right to return; however, it also includes stories of historical Palestine in its "glory days". The "homeland", as Chatty (2010) defines it, is "the imagined 'homeland' acquires a mythical status and image. [Palestine] is assumed to be unchanged by the departure and relocation of its dispossessed. Yet the way in which the representation of the imagined community is drawn and fixed rests largely with the people themselves," (25). These stories focus on the loss, tragedy, suffering, and pain that Palestinians feel being separated from their homeland. The majority of Palestinians relate to these stories that are embedded in the collective narrative. Additionally, these stories often glorify historical Palestine, portraying it in an idealized way. For example, a discussion of memories of neighbors living in peace regardless of religion in historical Palestine is common. These stories, which address the homeland, rarely discuss the hardships and difficulties of living in Palestine, providing for one's family, or other hardships that occurred. Even though Palestine has been irrevocably changed geographically over time by the division and annexation of land by the Israeli government, this is no reason to white-wash the actuality of

Palestine prior to its division into two separate territories of Palestine and Israel in 1948. However, the Occupied Territories and tensions between Israel and Palestinians are rarely what are envisioned when Palestinians talk about the "homeland". Instead it is the idealized, pristine Palestine untouched by war and occupation, and this is what most Palestinians wish to return to. I will address the ways in which women personalize the collective narrative in order to connect with other Palestinians generationally and spatially, ideas of the "homeland", how Palestinians feel about discrimination they face, and their views on the right to return to their homeland. Through these common themes Palestinians use the collective narrative as a way to connect with one another, and it serves to create bonds with other Palestinian refugees. This strengthens ties between Palestinians and helps to consolidate a sense of comradery that aids in the creation of a "nation of people" as Anderson (2006) envisioned it. Each of these topics are important to understanding what the collective narrative is, and how it relates to daily life and ritualized events, and thus informs Palestinian national identity.

Personalizing the Collective Narrative:

The collective narrative is the stories that are told, and the focus that Palestinians place upon loss of their homeland, and emphasize injustices that Palestinians have faced both in Palestine and in other countries. These stories help to connect generations of Palestinians, and unite Palestinians across the globe in their suffering. While I have provided an example of one way how children are taught the basics of the collective narrative, I only briefly mentioned the role that parents play. For this section, I will discuss the importance of parents of Palestinian youth, and how they personalize these stories that embody the collective narrative, in order to better educate their children about the loss, pain, suffering, and exile that so many Palestinians

have faced over the past sixty-six years. The parents of Palestinian youth must be able to personalize these collective narrative stories in order to develop an empathetic link between their children and other Palestinians. It is this emotional bond that ties all Palestinians together, and helps to solidify Palestinians into a cohesive unit of Palestinian refugees.

A handful of my informants had been refugees and fled Palestine with their families during various conflicts. This is how they personalized their stories, but relating what had happened to them when they were younger to other generations of Palestinians and to outsiders. Hajja Zeina and her sister Hajja Besma fled Gaza during the Six-Day War, and both shared their stories with me. Hajja Zeina started, "In the old days before I came to Jordan. We were trapped with the Egyptian Army in our village. We got surrounded and they (the Israelis) kept hitting us with planes and bombs. The Jews came and were bombing us, and then the Egyptian army too," (Melendy, 6/10/13). Hajja Zeina was talking about the Six-Day War and her experiences during the fighting. Her home town became occupied first by Israeli troops. The Egyptian army eventually took control of her village, but was eventually defeated by the Israeli forces. "And then we went to a camp and it started raining so bad, I remember. We stayed in tents, and they wouldn't give us food. The ground got filthy and muddy. The Jews wouldn't give us enough to eat. We had to work to find a way to get food," (Melendy, 6/10/13). She and her family suffered because they had lost their livelihood, and were forced into a refugee camp. Her family had to find a way to support themselves, "So we started cutting wood, and selling it, and used it to warm ourselves. We used the wood to make bread. And some people, they opened a bakery and we used the wood to bake, and we sold them the wood for this bakery. We used to carry the wood on our heads," (Melendy, 6/10/13). Hajja Zeina details the struggles of her family, living in the poor camp. It was after some time in the camps near Khalil City that her family moved to

Jordan to start a better life farming in Northern Jordan. "It wasn't easy," she recalled, "We saw very dark days and it was very bad. We have been suffering for 64 years. Suffering from all that. But what are we are going to do. We won't complain too much," (Melendy, 6/10/13). Hajja Zeina spoke candidly about the suffering her family faced both in the refugee camp in Gaza, and in starting a new life in Jordan. For Hajja Zeina returning to Palestine is a dream, "And there is no way I think we are going back to Palestine. It will be almost impossible. It would be better if we were in Palestine. I would love to go back, but it is too difficult to go back. It would be nice to go live with my family and friends there. Our heart would be there. We would be with our family and we would share the pain, the happiness together. Hopefully, Allah will send a person like Saladin to save Palestine...I really wish that Allah would send someone like Saladin to save Palestine," (Melendy, 6/10/13). The reference to Saladin, who was a very famous leader during the Crusades, managed to repel the Europeans from Jerusalem. She uses this reference as a suggestion of militarily taking over Jerusalem and Israel. She emphasizes her hope for this way of "freeing Palestine", though she says, "to save".

What is interesting is that both Hajja Besma and Hajja Zeina were close in age and experienced the same situation, but how they related to what was happening in their village and the refugee camps were completely different. Hajja Besma followed her sister, but she refused to answer any of my questions. Instead, she told me her story of her and her family's flight from Gaza during the Six-Day War. Hajja Besma said, "It was the war of 1967. I was seven or eight years old when it began, and we went to the camps first. We used to carry water on our heads. And we used to bathe and drink water, then we brought wood and set it on fire to make bread. We cut wood and wrapped it in bundles and carried with my head, and take it to make bread, and bring it home. When we go home we made fires. We used it to make fire, to cook, and heat

water, and make bread. We would use it to get warm," (Melendy, 6/10/13). Both women talked about the hard work that they had to perform. However, Hajja Besma focused on the fact that they had to fetch water, and then started talking about getting and selling the wood. "We used to walk without shoes or anything, and we would walk barefoot. We had nothing. We were stuck between Egypt and Israel troops. When it rained and the camp the tents had holes and we would get wet," (Melendy, Hajja Besma 6/10/13). How she approached the idea of suffering was not as overt as her sister. Hajja Besma complained about the conditions, but did not use as strong of language as her sister Hajja Zeina. In fact, Hajja Besma even tells me more about the camps than her sister does focusing on the few good events that occurred while she was there. She said, "A little bit from here and a little bit from there, they gave us new tents, and so each family got to stay in their own tents instead of many families in one tent," (Melendy, Hajja Besma 6/10/13). This sort of detail is valuable to understanding her personal experience in the camp. However, she talked about going to work on the farms in Jordan, but she focused on another detail, "Many of us went to work as harvesters in the fields. We used to be kids, I didn't go and help, I just go to have fun. It wasn't a really bad life, but it was tough," (Melendy, Hajja Besma 6/10/13). For Hajja Besma she tries to qualify some of the negative aspects of her life with little positive notes. She personalizes her story and makes it different from her sister's story in that way. Hajja Besma, though she told me about the hard conditions, and sometimes in better detail than her sister, she still managed to find some good aspects of her early childhood. However, one event she told me was a very powerful image, and something her sister did not even mention, which is important because it happened to her father and her sister. Hajja Besma started, "It was the Israelis who kicked us out of our country...The Jewish killed so many of the men from our town and our family. Sometimes if they saw someone walking they would arrest him for no reason,

and then two days later you would find them dead," (Melendy, 6/10/13). She started recalling all of the atrocities and massacres that happened in and around her village. She said,

> "The Sudanese army came to our town to help us, and it was raining so badly. And the Jewish were hassling them until they got sleepy and then they killed all of them. The next day they gathered all the people from the village in the park in our town. My sister and father were part of this group, and they were almost going to shoot all of us, but the weapons didn't work. This was a miracle from Allah. After this, a team of forces from Egypt they came from a village called al-Faluga, and they surrounded them. They came to the town and surrounded them. When the Jews knew that the Egyptian army was there the Jews started hiding in the animal pens, on the roofs, and in the bakeries. The Egyptian army used knives and swords to kill them all, and they collected them all around 300 and they buried them all in one grave. The people of the town they helped the Egyptian army. The army asked us if we wanted to stay here in town close to the Jews or go to Egypt or go to Jordan. None of us moved." (Melendy, 6/10/13).

Hajja Besma was not linear at all in her story line, and did not refer to specific times or dates. Instead, she focused on major events that left a major impact on her and her family. She focused upon the hardships in the camps, and then jumped back in time to focus on the many deaths and fighting that happened in her small village. Hajja Besma's story focused on her personal struggles, and not so much on bringing all Palestinians together in these shared experiences, unlike her sister who spoke of the collective suffering more than Hajja Besma. She personalized these happenings, and willingly related them to me, as she had done with others, like her children.

For both sisters, Hajja Besma and Hajja Zeina their stories focused on the many hardships that they faced after fleeing the war in their country. Hajja Zeina focused on the injustice and unfair treatment that the Palestinians received at the hands of Israeli forces who occupied their village. She spoke of shared pain and happiness with other Palestinians as a way to come together. However, her story is her own personal narrative and her own personal struggle, and is one that she has told many times to not only me, but also to her children and grandchildren as well. Her focus was more on the hardships she personally faced and overcame

in order to survive. Hajja Besma shared her stories with her family and with other Palestinians, but she wanted to tell her story so that it would be out there for the world to see. In this way, Hajja Besma was an activist with her story. She took control of how the story was told and to whom it was told. She did not want other youth to suffer in the same way she had when she fled Gaza all those years ago. Her story was not just a story about suffering, but it was to bring awareness of the major atrocities that occurred and impacted Palestinian refugees who were caught in the midst of the fighting. This was why Hajja Besma continually emphasized her young age throughout the telling of her exile.

There are many emotions brought up by these stories that women told me. Often, the emotion and feelings of loss are expressed by Palestinian refugees in terms of either land lost, or the death of Palestinians. This is best expressed by Um Adil, as we sat drinking mango juice in her living room, and her half-granddaughter sat on her lap,

> "I think a lot about Palestine. My mother, my father, they told me about Israel. They told me how Israeli fighters came to our village and started killing people. All talk about this. My father was in the army, and was sent to Jordan by Israel. He could never go back. I can never see my home in Palestine because my father was in the army and fought Israel. My mother and brother stayed in Palestine for a while. My brother wanted to fight Israel. But that's it, they were sent to Jordan too. All of them go to Jordan because Israel was killing people," (Melendy, 7/23/13).

For Um Adil, her family being kicked out of their own country because her father was part of the Palestinian army at that time was time that epitomized her family's loss. Her family lost their land, friends, and some family members during this time. Most of my informants who had fled Palestine were able to easily personalize stories, either of their own, or of their families suffering. By personalizing the narratives, it allows the individual to claim ownership over the narrative, and it serves to build connections of shared suffering with other Palestinians (Hamdan-Saliba and Fenster 2012; Holt 2007; Haj 1992). This is necessary for Palestinians who live as refugees

in order to formulate a stable community.

Informants who grew up and lived in Jordan were able to personalize the collective narrative, as well. Many had stories ready that their parents, aunts, uncles, or grandparents had shared with them. The best example of the personalization of the collective narrative by a young woman, who has never been to Palestine, is Hazar, and her family's scrapbook. This is the book I described earlier that held generations worth of newspaper clippings, poems, stories, songs, and everything that the women in Hazar's family felt should be in that scrap book. For Hazar, she related to the Palestinian collective narrative on a deeply personal level through this book. Many informants, who had never been to Palestine, would often talk about the suffering that family members had gone through fleeing Palestine, or living in refugee camps across the Middle East. These individuals, who had never physically been to Palestine or the Occupied Territories at any point in their lives, had built an emotional connection to their families' homeland based upon stories. These women related to other Palestinians through these stories. They were able to explain their refugee status and way of life through these stories that had been handed down over the years, from one generation to the next.

These stories that have been personalized and shared may not be told on a daily basis within a family, but they are shared often enough to foster the necessary empathy from one Palestinian to another. In this way, the collective narrative serves as a link between all Palestinians, of all ages, no matter where they were born and currently live. These stories from the collective narrative, that family members have personalized, help to formulate a part of an individual's identity, which these refugee women then use to create connections of friendship and unity with other Palestinian women. The collective narrative through this bonding encourages Palestinian women to feel pride in their national identity, and always share the stories from one

generation to the next. By continuing the tradition of the collective narrative and the personalization of it, Palestinian women help to cement the Palestinian national identity in the tangible, recordable narrative that exists, and they preserve it for future generations.

The Homeland:

The "homeland" that many of my informants refer to, is an imagined homeland of Palestine. It embodies historical Palestine, existing solely with no division between the state of Israel and the Occupied Territories. The vision often offered by Palestinians when discussing Palestine is focused upon the beauty of Palestine. Most of my informants, even if they have never physically seen any part of Palestine, would argue that it is much more beautiful than Jordan. All of my informants told me over and over how beautiful and easier life was in Palestine. My informant, Yasmeen, is a young woman who recently finished college, but is not married. She was born in Yemen, but raised in Jordan. We sat outside her home smoking hookah, drinking tea, and eating a small dessert of fried dough with syrup during our interview. Yasmeen was looking for work to help support her family, and she said, "Palestine is beautiful, much more beautiful than Jordan,"(Melendy, 7/15/13). Safiya is a young lady, currently in college, who was born and raised in Jordan. She stated during our interview, a similar comment as Yasmeen, she asserted, "Palestine is much prettier than Jordan. It's much better to live there," (Melendy, Safiya 7/24/13). Another Palestinian woman, Um Adil, who was in her late thirties, and was married to a Jordanian man, had been born and raised in Zarqa explained, "Palestine is much better than Jordan. Jordan is difficult to live in. Palestine is so much beautiful more than Jordan. No sea and no water in Jordan, and this is hard," (Melendy, 7/23/13). For Um Adil, Jordan lacked beauty and ease of living because of the lack of water and resources. She believed

that Palestine had more water, which made it a better place to live and more beautiful. None of these women had ever visited any part of historical Palestine, or the Occupied Territories. Though they did have access to pictures from the internet and books, many times published photos can be used to either idealize a place, or have other goals than showing the reality of the situation. Photography is an art form that is malleable and shaped by the artist. However, all of my informants were certain in their declaration that Palestine is more beautiful and better than their current country of Jordan. However these statements while telling, in the sense that my informants firmly believe that Palestine is better and prettier than Jordan, though they rarely elaborate as to why it is so.

Palestinians, who had fled from Palestine during various conflicts, support and encourage these statements by youth who have never been to Palestine by teaching them about Palestine and encouraging Palestinian pride and nationalism. Hajja Musheera was an older lady who had fled Palestine in 1968. Her husband had passed away, and she was living with her son. She brought us coffee to drink while we spoke. Hajja Musheera talked about how beautiful Palestine was, "The land is green, and many things grow there. Not like Jordan. We have so many groves of olive trees," (Melendy, 6/10/13). Another informant who fled Palestine in 1968 with her family, and sister Hajja Besma, Hajja Zeina stated, "And I know it is beautiful," (Melendy, 6/10/13). Both of these women had lived in Palestine previously, and extolled its beauty. These declarations that older generations made were picked up by younger women in the community, who then made similar claims regarding Palestine being beautiful even though they had never seen it for themselves.

Children, who are born and raised outside of the Occupied Territories and historical Palestine, must be taught the collective narrative by adults because they have never had the

opportunity to visit their families' historical homeland. Another way that children are enculturated into the Palestinian collective narrative is through education at local religious schools. Since Palestinian refugees tend to live in communities close to one another, they will often attend the same mosque for prayers and send their children to the same religious schools when they are young to educate them about their religion. These schools hold classes, similar to Sunday school classes held in churches here in the United States. I had the opportunity to attend one of these religious schools, talk with a couple of the teachers, and watch a play that the students were working on. The class focused on teaching the children the story of Moses, and his freeing his people from the Egyptians. However, it was the play that was most interesting aspect of my visit. The play was a series of poems and songs that focused on the division of Palestine, and subsequent wars fought over the land. The children recited poems about the sadness that Palestinians felt for losing their land. They sang songs about freeing Palestine. Several poems talked about the beauty of Palestine, and the great olive groves that grew there. This was followed by a song about how Israel was destroying the trees and environment in the Occupied Territories. However, the last song in particular was about how Palestinians would one day rise up together to fight Israel, free Palestine, and all Palestinians could return to their homeland and live in peace. The children wore traditional costumes. The boys carried plastic swords, and the girls held baskets of flowers. This is only one of the ways in which Palestinian children are taught the stories of Palestine; and their parents serve as another mode of education, helping to personalize the stories of the collective narrative.

Most of the Palestinian refugees thought it would be better to live there than in Jordan, and based this upon their perceptions of the ease of life and beauty of Palestine. The importance of the focus upon the beauty is yet another way to idealize and perfect the mythical homeland of

Palestine. Reinforcing the idea that it is more beautiful than Jordan, helps to create a sense of longing, and it is this sense of longing that helps solidify the idea of returning. It is beautiful and better than Jordan, and so, everyone, including people who have never been there before, wish to return to the homeland of their forefathers. When asked to define the beauty, many informants suggested that the land was more fertile and greener than Jordan. It is this fertility, that life there is somehow easier or better, and the beauty that is intertwined with the idea of fertility that makes it desirable to live in Palestine. How does this discussion of beauty impact Palestinian refugees' daily life or rituals? This is a little more difficult to get at, but the imagery surrounding Palestine is something that is regularly talked about in daily life by Palestinian refugees, and particularly women. These women are the ones who are charged with sharing their own stories with their children. It is Palestinian women's jobs to educate their children on how to behave, dress, cook, and act like a Palestinian. So, the goal of a Palestinian mother is to relate the idea of this perfect Palestine to her offspring, and bring them up to understand their Palestinian identity. It is necessary for children to know their parent and grandparent's stories, and to understand the suffering, loss, and hardships that Palestinians have faced since losing their homeland.

Discrimination:

Part of understanding the hardships that Palestinians face, is knowing about the discrimination and prejudice that Palestinians experience. Some Palestinian refugees believe that their right to return is important due to the discrimination and problems that they face living abroad, and not in their own country. A little over half of my informants described to me the discrimination that Palestinian refugees who live in Jordan face. Even though all of my informants had Jordanian citizenship, they felt that they or family members experienced

discrimination. The main complaints revolved around children not being treated equally in primary and secondary schools, informants' children would not get into certain universities because Jordanian youth would be accepted before them, Palestinians would not get specific jobs within the government, their husbands and children would not get jobs because preference was given to Jordanian applicants, and so forth. Um Osama, was a middle-aged woman born and raised Jordan, she said, "The main places we face discrimination is with jobs, education, and traveling. My husband has gone to Syria, but we can't go to Gaza, Iraq, Libya. It's hard to travel," (Melendy, 6/3/13). For Um Osama, the discrimination in regards to travel is because other countries will not allow her or husband to visit them because they are Palestinian. For individuals whose families have been forced from their land, and live as refugees, sometimes scattered throughout the Middle East, this can make things difficult. Another example is, Hajja Fanan, who was my oldest informant and had fled Palestine in 1948. She had many children and grandchildren. Hajja Fanan framed the discrimination more as a struggle her family had to overcome. She explained how her children had problems initially in Jordan, "My sons and daughters had to fight to get everything we have. We have our own store now that my husband started. When I came to Jordan, we lived in the camp and we had nothing. My family moved out [of the camp]. My oldest son took over the store. No one gave us anything. My children had to work hard to get what they had too...Palestinians here, they do not always get good jobs, or into good schools. Those are saved for Jordanians. Mostly, Jordanians are good to us, but they get better than us," (Melendy, Hajja Fanan 6/10/13). This view is echoed by Um Naser who said, "Jordanians will take care of each other more than us. They respect them more than us. Like when Jordanian women go to the government they will respect them before us," (Melendy, Um Naser 6/10/13). One of my informants who was in university still, named Hessa felt

differently. Hessa was a student at Al-Albait University, and she felt that there was discrimination, "For the most part the laws are good, but there is discrimination. Usually we see it happening in the university, who gets in and who doesn't. Or with jobs we see it with who gets the job and those who don't. However, the laws they are good, those are the same," (Melendy, Hessa 7/3/13). The view that Jordan does discriminate against Palestinians is not universal though. For example, one of my younger informants, a young woman who just graduated from university, Isaf, said almost the exact opposite: Isaf said, "There are no problems. We have the same rights, and we it's the same whether Jordanian or Palestinian," (Melendy, 7/13/13). Isaf claimed that Palestinians and Jordanians have equal rights, and that there is no discrimination in Jordan. Over all, of all of my informants, only a little over half felt that there was discrimination. However, discrimination was still a common answer as to why Palestinians should be able to return to their homeland. While many of my informants felt that they did not experience discrimination personally, nor did other Palestinians living in Jordan, they argued that other Palestinians living in other Arab nations, like Lebanon and Syria did, and because of this discrimination Palestinians should have their own sovereign country to protect them.

The right to return to Palestine is central to the collective narrative. The statements of fact and arguments made by the Palestinian women I interviewed help to show that they feel strongly about both the beauty of Palestine, and the belief that life would be better there for them if they lived in their own "free Palestine". The argument of the right to return is supported by all of my informants, even if they themselves do not wish to live in Palestine. This argument helps to solidify Palestinian refugees into one singular group with one clear goal - to gain access to a free state of Palestine. The right to return is a central part of the collective narrative, and is one way that all Palestinian refugees, whether born in Palestine, the Occupied Territories, or abroad

can participate in the collective narrative. Thus, these women make their Palestinian national identity a central part of their lives by actively engaging in the personalization of the Palestinian collective narrative at different levels, but with most asserting their basic right to return to Palestine.

Right to Return:

The right to return to Palestine is the argument given by a majority of Palestinian refugees, and says Palestinian refugees have a legal right to return to their homes prior to the 1948 division of Palestine and Israel, and if they cannot return to their homes then they should be paid compensation. The right to return or right to compensation was first stated in United Nations resolution 194 (Benvenisti, et al. 2007: 191-2). Often Palestinians verbalize this as the "freeing of Palestine". This can mean many different things. Sometimes it can mean an independent state along side Israel within the borders drawn up by the United Nations, sometimes it means an independent Palestine instead of a state of Israel, and it can mean an Israel free of Zionism where Palestinians and Israelis live together. Many of my informants discussed this topic, but Hajja Besma said it clearest by saying, "We hope that Palestine will be free again, and I hope that it will be like back in the time of Saladin[15]. That this [freedom] will come from god," (Melendy, 6/10/13). Hajja Besma fled from Gaza to Egypt in 1967 when she was young. She remembered clearly the horrors of the war, but wished for a return of the time prior to all the fighting. She spoke of freedom that will come from god, and many refugees embrace the idea that Palestine will one day be free, and it will be because of their faith in a higher power. Most of my informants believed that this freeing of Palestine is central to

[15] Saladin was a sultan, and eventually founded the Ayyubid dynasty. He led military campaigns against crusaders coming to the Middle East to liberate the "Holy Land". He is the leader who led to a "golden age" in the Middle East.

allowing Palestinians to return to their homeland.

The Palestinian refugees that I talked with felt that if they had their own country, Palestine, they would not have to face discrimination, problems traveling, and the hardships that they face in Jordan. Um Khader was in her mid thirties, and she had four children. She had fled from Palestine with her parents during the First Intifada around 1988. Her family refused to live in the refugee camps in Jordan, and instead they were homeless for a time in Amman. Eventually they found work, and Um Kahder completed school and went on to college at the University of Jordan, where she met her husband. She felt very passionately about the plight of Palestine, "I wish that my country will be free. I hope that the Arab countries would come together to fight for Palestine. This is what needs to happen! After Palestine is free, then all Palestinians living in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and all over the world can come back to their homes," (Melendy, 7/7/13). For Um Khader, she asserted that the freeing of Palestine will allow all Palestinians the chance to return. However, her comments do not get to the heart of why most people advocate for the "freedom of Palestine." Hajja Zeina's statement comes to mind again, as to why this idea of freeing Palestine and the ability of Palestinians to return there is so important, "I would love to go back and live in our houses with our family when it is safe, among your neighbors and family. You always feel different if you are in your country. In Jordan, you feel like you're renting a house. You never own it" (Melendy, Hajja Zeina 6/10/13). These women feel like outsiders in Jordan. They want their own, independent country to live in. However, neither Um Khader, nor Um Mohammed addressed those few examples of women who do not wish to return to Palestine.

While the idea of freeing Palestine is important to all Palestinian refugees, it does not mean that they, as an individual, wish to return there. I only had a couple of all of my informants

who said they would not return to live in Palestine. One woman I talked about already was Um Mohammed. She was adamant that she would stay in Jordan, regardless if she could return to Palestine or not. She felt that her home was in Jordan, since she had moved here with her family, and all of her children were living in Zarqa. Um Mohammed additionally felt that Jordan was more peaceful and stable than living in Palestine, or the Occupied Territories. Another informant, Um Basim, had originally been a Palestinian refugee to Syria with her family, and she moved to Jordan when she got married. She stated, "I love Palestine, and I want to visit where my family is from [Jaffra]. But I want to live in Syria. Syria is more beautiful than Jordan, or Palestine," (Melendy, 7/28/13). Um Basim wanted to be able to go to Palestine freely, but she would choose to live elsewhere. Both Um Mohammed and Um Basim are rare finds amongst the majority of Palestinian refugees. However, they show that there is a range of opinions in regards to a "free Palestine" and the right to return. That while most Palestinians advocate for a free Palestine and the right to return, there are still those few individuals who advocated for others, but they themselves have made their homes outside of their family's historical homeland of Palestine.

Conclusion:

The Palestinian collective narrative is an ever growing, constant part of Palestinian refugees' lives. It fulfills the role of creating a record of the history of Palestine and the Palestinian people. For Palestinian refugees, this narrative is their collective voices, dictating what it is to be a Palestinian. The focus of the stories may be loss, pain, suffering, and such, but these stories serve the deeper purpose of bringing Palestinians together. The personalization of the collective narrative creates deep emotional bonds from one generation to the next, and serves

to bind people together across space and time. The ideas that encapsulate the idealized imagery used to describe Palestine as the eternally beautiful, perfect homeland, aid in this as well, by creating a strong desire in individuals to achieve the idealized homeland. It is through these mechanisms that Palestinians build a sense of community.

CHAPTER 3: NOT JUST GENDER

For my informants, they are not only women, but they are Palestinian refugees who live in Jordan, and are Muslims. Each of these categories distinctly shapes their worldview and their view of themselves. Palestinian identity is a major part of a Palestinian refugee's life, but that does not mean that it is their only identity. Palestinian women live a complex social life where they must balance multiple expectations in relation to their gender, religion, and other aspects of their ethnicity. Palestinian women who live in Jordan embody many roles--some may be contradictory, and others seemingly meld together easily. These various roles are a result of social and cultural expectations and religious obligations. Often times, gender expectations are naturalized. Many of my informants viewed their position through religion, and one even stated, "Men and women are equal, but they have different responsibilities. This is explained to us in the Quran," (Melendy, Um Ackmed 5/29/13). This was how Um Ackmed explained it to me, but she was not the only informant to phrase her gender obligations in this way. Um Ackmed and my other informants were performing gender roles, which they assert are supported by religion, and cultural practices. In these women's view, sex and gender are regularly conflated. This is supported by Simona Sharoni who asserted, "In many cultures and societies, gender is often understood as interchangeable with sex, that is, the biological differences between males and females," (1995, 14). When conducting research, the researcher must acknowledge that gender roles are a major part of an individual's identity and not discount the impact that gender has on experiences. People will try to follow gender expectations and norms because they have been enculturated to do so. This is supported by Candace West and Don Zimmerman,

> "The sex category/gender relationship links the institutional and interactional levels; a coupling that legitimates social arrangements based on sex category and reproduces their asymmetry in face-to-face interactions. Doing gender furnishes the interactional scaffolding of social structure, along with a built-in mechanism of social control. In

> appreciating the institutional forces that maintain distinctions between women and men, we must not lose sight of the interactional validation of those distinctions that confers upon them their sense of 'naturalness' and 'rightness'," (West and Zimmerman 1987, 148).

However, it is not just gender, which is a cultural constructed, that helps to shape an individual's life, it can be shaped by the religion they adhere to, and all other aspects of their lives. Researchers must examine "gender seriously [which] implies asking questions about a complex set of behaviors, social norms, systems of meaning, ways of thinking, and relationships that affect how we experience, understand, and represent ourselves as men and women," (Sharoni 1995, 15). It is within these intersecting categories that researchers must understand the complex lives of Palestinian women who live as refugees in other countries. In the following sections, I will address concrete gender norms and expectations that are expressed in the home, and through dress and clothing.

Palestinian women are expected to follow traditional gender cultural norms. When women do not adhere to these expected norms, they are socially punished in order to ensure future observance, thus perpetuating gendered cultural norms in Palestinian society. In some, but not all, instances these gendered cultural norms can be seen as "social facts" as "These types of conduct or thought are not only external to the individual but are, moreover, endowed with coercive power, by virtue of which they impose themselves upon him, independent of his individual will," (Durkheim 1895, 51). Expected gender norms are often framed in terms of responsibility by my informants. There are a series of things that women are expected to do; like cooking, cleaning, wearing appropriate clothing, practicing their religion, taking care of guests, and so forth. If women do not perform these cultural norms, they will face social pressures to try to get them to conform. If a woman is not cooking or cleaning her house as is dictated by social norms, or dressing in local cultural norms, women tend to gossip about that individual.

Visiting and Visitors:

Visiting neighbors, friends, and family is not only kindly social behavior, but mandated in Palestinian society as an expectation that all should engage in. Visiting others helps to formulate social bonds and strengthens the community. Neighbors expect other neighbors to visit in Zarqa, and not just for special events, holidays, and the like, but just for the sake of visiting in order to sit down drink some tea or coffee and chat. If a family chooses not to visit their neighbors regularly, often there is gossip about them being anti-social. Even individuals who happen to be not well liked throughout the community visit their neighbors regularly. I had neighbors, who lived up the street, the mother of household was Palestinian, and she was called Aliya. She made concentrated efforts to visit neighbors when she could. Aliya was not well liked by most of the other neighbors because of her crass way of speaking. When she came to visit, she would cuss excessively, and lacked social graces expected of Palestinian women. She got into fistfights on occasion, and had been known to slap other women if she got into a verbal argument with them. Regardless, she still would visit her neighbors, and her neighbors would be polite and offer her food and drink. Although after she would leave, many would talk about her inappropriate behavior. To the woman's face, her neighbors were nice and followed proper etiquette for hosting a guest. Every time a person visits, tea or coffee is offered. Depending on how long the person stayed in the home, they would be invited to eat a light snack, like fruit or cookies. If they happened to be visiting close to a mealtime, then it was expected that they be invited for the meal. This type of behavior was evident at all of my interviews, and any additional visits that I made to other households. Another example was a Palestinian woman who had come from Syria to get married to a local Palestinian man. In this particular case, the

gossiping occurred while visiting another neighbor, Um Faisal. While I was there, Um Basim came to visit as well. While at Um Faisal's house talk about other neighbors and other family members was common, as Um Faisal and Um Basim were very close friends. Um Basim was complaining about her new neighbor, Hala. Um Basim complained, "She is not a good hostess, her house isn't clean, and when she visits she never helps clean up anything!" (Melendy, Um Basim 7/15/13). The gossip continued on, complaining about the woman's moral character, eventually diverging to gossip of other locals. Ironically, gossiping is highly frowned upon, and women who do gossip excessively about others come to be known as, "al-nimeya", literally, "a gossip". When a person is known to be a gossip amongst their neighbors, it often results in verbal arguments, or ostracism by neighbors. When Hala found out that Um Basim was gossiping about her, it resulted in a verbal altercation where both women did not visit or talk to one another for a couple weeks.

In this case, gossiping, even though it is heavily frowned upon, and resulted in an argument, was used as a means to reinforce what is thought to be proper behavior. Again, visiting serves the purpose of strengthening the community and reinforcing social bonds. The use of gossip as a way to censor and restrict women's inappropriate, or what is viewed as non-Palestinian behavior, is useful to constructing a generally accepted social norm. Visiting is used as a way to develop a sense of community and strengthen relationships amongst women. Both gossiping and visiting are extremely important to Palestinian refugees, who are living outside of their homeland, and necessitates that they continuously reinforce these bonds to maintain a distinct Palestinian based community.

Familial ties are extremely important to help reinforce Palestinian identity and ties to Palestine. Visiting family is necessary to fortify and emphasize these social bonds. One evening

when Thamina was visiting, she asked if I would go with her to meet her husband's sister. The woman lived near by, and Thamina had not seen her in a couple weeks, and felt obligated to visit her. We had time so we went, and I was introduced to Rasha, Thamina's sister-in-law. Thamina and I sat in Rasha's home for a couple of hours just talking. Rasha offered us tea, juice, and fried sweet cakes with nuts inside. The topic of choice was gossip about what Um Basim had been up to lately, and what troubles she has caused. This is mainly in relationship to an argument between Um Basim and a neighbor arguing over water that was piped to the houses by the city. After having food and drink, we left and went to Um Basim's house. They asked me to ride along with them in the car back to their houses. So we all got ready and hopped in the car. While we waited on Um Basim to get ready to ride along we ran into Um Faisal and her friend Um Hajar. We invited them to ride along as well. Therefore, Abu Basim, Um Basim, and Um Hamza rode up front, and Thamina, Um Faisal, Um Hajar, and I rode in the back seat with all the kids. It was very cramped, but we had a lot of fun. We talked about Ramadan and what we had for Iftar that night. We talked about the pretty lights that people used to decorate their houses. While most houses have some lights and decorations, there are on occasion houses that go all out, as they do in the United States for Christmas, with elaborate light displays. We compared holidays and traditions based on religion and culture. This sort of interaction was common and considered to be proper of young women. It helped to bring people together and formulate fraternity amongst women.

At all of my interviews, my informants would offer me drinks and sometimes snacks. Sometimes it would be juice, other times it would be tea, or coffee. Depending on how long I stayed at their house chatting, snacks would be brought out. An example of this is when I went to interview a neighbor, Yasmeen. We sat outside Yasmeen's home on the veranda, in order to

enjoy the night. Smoke curled upward into the warm, night air, as Yasmeen took a long draw on the hookah. Yasmeen told me of how Palestinians love their traditions and how traditions were a large part of their lives, "Most Palestinians, as you can say, as 90% they care for their traditions too much," (Melendy, 7/15/13). Yasmeen claimed that she was Palestinian, and insisted that she had no ties to Jordan, except her passport and citizenship, which she did not view as important. She was very adamant about this, "No, no, no! Not at all," (Melendy, 7/15/13). Yasmeen said that it was important to her that others know that she is Palestinian, "They must know. I must show it because I am very proud of my people," (Melendy, 7/15/13). To Yasmeen, her Palestinian heritage was extremely important; she spoke of returning to her family's hometown in Palestine, because "Palestine is beautiful, much more beautiful than Jordan," (Melendy, 7/15/13). She offered me the hookah, and we smoked. Later on her little sister came out bringing juice and fried bread balls covered in syrup. After finishing the juice and snacks, her little sister brought out tea. When we were almost finished with the interview, her mother and sister came out to join us. When they came, they brought with them coffee. Most of my interviews were like this. Food and drink were always offered to guests. This is something that is considered a sign of good manners, and a proper upbringing.

One of my informants, Um Osama, explained the reason behind offering food and drink to guests, "We live in a desert. It is important that you take care of your guests because you do not know when you will be their guest. If you don't take care of them, then how do you expect them to treat you well when you visit them?" (Melendy, 6/3/13). For her, being hospitable to a guest is a matter of reciprocity and good manners. However, Hajja Nasrin viewed it in terms of her religion, "For me, it is important to share what I have with others. Charity is a part of our religion. This isn't the same, but we are expected to treat our guests well, like Mohammad

(subhanahu wa ta'ala[16]). It says in the hadiths[17] and the Quran how we should treat our guests, and a good Muslim follows these," (Melendy, Hajja Nasrin 6/5/13). These are the justifications used to explain social expectations of how guests be treated with respect and offered food and drink. Another interviewee, Um Ackmed, joked with me, "We care more about food and drink than foreigners do," (Melendy, Um Ackmed 7/13/13). While the practice itself is interesting, how it relates to gender is more interesting. As I mentioned in a couple of examples, it was women who prepared and brought these offerings out to guests. This is something I noticed when I was conducting my research, and helped with on occasion. When guests come to visit it is the responsibility of the mother, or in some cases older daughters to prepare drinks and food to be brought out to guests. This is a gendered cultural practice. Men will prepare food and drink for their visitors, but only if their wives and daughters are not at home. Most often, it is the woman's role to prepare and serve food and drinks. This is a cultural expectation relegated to women, and considered important because of the religious, cultural, and social implications.

Visiting and how visitors are treated is a cultural norm that is actively taught to children as they become older in order to continue the practice. It serves the purpose of reinforcing and creating social ties within a community. Visiting and hospitality are necessary amongst Palestinian refugees because it helps to create a sense of solidarity and builds up social connections that help maintain a sense of community even when living in a foreign country. It helps by reinforcing traditions that are tied to Palestinian culture, and formulates ways for Palestinian women to relate with one another. However, visiting and hospitality are interconnected with gender norms and expectations, cultural practices, and religion. The

[16] Subhanahu wa ta'ala is an Arabic phrase used when talking about any prophets, and translates to "glorified and exalted be he". This phrase when written is often shortened to "swt" when written in English.
[17] Hadiths are collections of stories and sayings about the prophet Mohammad. These are also known as the Sunna, and relate his daily practices. These are important to Muslims and help them to better understand their faith and how they should practice their faith, and how that relates to their daily activities.

Palestinian women with whom I spoke would use these frameworks as a way to explain their behavior. Many times, the explanations overlapped and cultural practices, gender expectations, and religion would all be used to explain why hospitality and visiting one's neighbors was so important amongst Palestinian women.

Dress and Clothing:

This social pressure is evident when my informants talked about teaching youth about their heritage and encouraging them to wear traditional Palestinian clothing. However, first we need to understand the expectations that women are held to for what they wear. Generally speaking, a woman is expected to cover her arms to the wrist by wearing long sleeves; legs should be covered to the ankle with long skirts, pants, or jeans; the vast majority of women were Muslim and therefore headscarves were expected in Zarqa, as well; and due to the majority of the city being Muslim, religious clothing was common. There are different types of Islamic clothing, which I will explain. The first is abaya; this is a floor-length, black robe or overcoat. It can have embellishments or be plain. It is made of light fabric, and is meant to be worn over other clothing. The second is the jelbab, which is of variable length and color. However, these tend to be in neutral or dark colors. They can be any length from mid-thigh to floor-length. The jelbab is made of heavier materials, but is still meant to be worn over other clothes. Hijab refers to a headscarf that covers a woman's hair. Niqab is the scarf that covers not only the hair, but also the face, but leaves the eyes open. However, Palestinians have a traditional dress referred to as the thobe. It is a loose, non-form fitting dress, with long-sleeves. It can be any color, but always has embroidery on it. The embroidery is the important part of the dress, as the embroidery pattern is associated with different parts of historical Palestine, and is handed down

generation to generation of embroiderers.

Often youth though would don clothing that was not traditional Palestinian garb, but rather would dress in attire that is more modern. This was seen mainly in my younger informants who were attending university, and those that were fresh from college. For example, Isaf would wear jelbab, but it was very modern in its style, with jeans under it. Safiya had asked her family for a new abaya for Ramadan, and the ones she picked out were "new models" that she found online. However, some other young women, like Hessa and Suha would wear niqab and abaya. These were traditional Islamic clothing, but lacked features to mark the women as distinctly Palestinian. Hessa and Suha were both young women that I met at a local university and were informants for my research. Both were first year students, Hessa was eighteen years old, and Suha was nineteen. Suha elaborated on why she chose to wear niqab, "I am Palestinian, and my heritage is important to me, but Islam is my faith, and I must follow it the best I can," (Melendy, 7/3/13). For her, it was more important to follow her faith than to show through dress that she was Palestinian. Many of my informants were very aware what was in style, and actively sought to get what was in style, in order to fit in amongst their peers. Cantara was one of these girls since she was also attending university. For her, she wore hijab and jelbab, but her choices were of higher quality. She wore a beautiful silk scarf with a new jelbab. Even though she did not specifically address her choices of clothing, she spoke highly of both her Palestinian heritage and the importance of her Islamic faith. She said, "Yes, I am Palestinian, but I am Muslim too. I practice my religion. But I celebrate that I am from Palestine," (Melendy, Cantara 7/3/13). Clothing styles and choices created some tension between the older generations who desired their young girls to dress in traditional Palestinian wear, like the embroidered thobe, and the young women who wanted to be seen as modern Muslim girls. While this created some

tension between generations, it was not seen as a complete loss. Styles change over time, and so most women did not see this necessarily as a losing of their Palestinian identity, but rather as a strengthening of their Muslim identity.

I personally experienced a form of social repercussions for not adhering to gender norms. Sometimes I would not dress as the locals dress when going out. Normally, I would wear a t-shirt and blue jeans, but the fact that I wore short sleeve shirts led to an incident after I completed interviews at an informant's house. As I was leaving, I stepped outside and waved goodbye. As I stood outside, I heard two women talking loudly, complaining about what I was wearing. I turned around and appraised both women who were speaking loudly in Arabic about the "weird foreigner" who dared "to wear short sleeves" and how it "was not acceptable" (Melendy, 6/5/13). Both women stared at me, and upon realizing that I understood, what they were saying stopped talking. One wore hijab (a headscarf) with a jelbab (an overcoat made of heavier materials) and the other wore an abaya (long, black overcoat made of thinner fabric) with niqab (face veil). While I had no problems meeting their stares and talking, they were not the only ones who would stare at me, when I would be out and obviously dressed as a foreigner. I regularly had people stare at me for dressing as an "ijnebya"[18]. What an individual wears is his or her own choice. However, the person must be aware of the consequences of their choices. In most instances, the infraction results in stares and whispers or in some cases a verbal remark.

There is strong social pressure to dress a certain way when living in Zarqa. This was made clear when talking with a couple of informants. The first example is from a Ramadan iftar meal I attended with a couple of informants. Um Najah started a conversation about how one of the neighbors near by had had her window open the day before. The woman was walking around in just a tank top and short shorts. The other women laughed and made jokes for a little bit about

[18] Ijnebya: is Arabic for "foreigner", and quickly became my nickname wherever I went in Zarqa.

this, and spoke of how careless the woman was by not making sure that her curtains were shut. One of the women, Um Hajar asked, "Did she look good in the tank top and shorts," (Melendy, 7/20/13). Um Najah replied, "Alhamdulillah (Thank god), yes, very good," (Melendy, 7/20/13). They dissolved into a bit of laughter after this. This is just another example of how women try to maintain cultural norms, but in relation to dress.

Dress is something unique to each individual, but there are strong socio-cultural pressures that women face. If women do not follow these norms, then they may face public ridicule, as is shown by the gossip. As I stated, there is further differences of what women wear based on age. Younger women wish to be viewed as modern Muslim women, and therefore adopt modern, Muslim fashion, as it suits them. However, older women frequently wear thobe, and this is expected of them. While it is perfectly acceptable for them to don more modern Muslim attire as well, it is exceedingly rare to see young women wear it. Though this shows a change in the cultural standards, it is not viewed as losing Palestinian culture, but rather the strengthening of the individual's faith, and an outward showing of a woman's piety.

Gender Expectations in the Household and Daily Life:

The role of the woman within her household varies depending upon the household structure. However, women are expected to clean, cook, do laundry, and take care of the household. This usually involves a semi-schedule each day that incorporates some of these things. For example, women in the household were expected to clean the floors, ensure that dishes were all washed, rugs were vacuumed, and bathrooms were cleaned. In a household where there was only one woman, this could take several hours depending on the size of the house. Some more affluent families would hire maids to help. Other households would have

children who were of an age to help and be assigned chores. Young boys would be expected to help some in the cleaning, but often if there were female children, the majority of household chores would fall on the girl. Many of the women I spoke with were stay-at-home mothers with large families. For example, Isaf was one of six children in her family. Large families are very common in Jordan. Only a few of my informants chose to work outside the home. Their reasoning was framed within the idea of what was expected of a Palestinian woman, or what is expected of a Muslim woman. Often these two categories overlapped. As I previously discussed, Um Ackmed was one of my informants who clearly stated, "Men and women are equal, but they have different responsibilities. This is explained to us in the Quran," (Melendy, 5/29/13). Um Haitham, a middle-aged informant, explained further, "Women are to take care of the home, and men provide and protect us. This is how it has always been," (Melendy, 6/5/13). My informants did not see their Palestinian identity and their Muslim identity as mutually exclusive, but rather as integrated and intersecting facet of their identity that melded well together.

Many of my informants expressed that they had multiple parts to their identities. This can be seen when women spoke of their ties to both Jordan and Palestine, through their dress, or through discussion of what was appropriate for women when it was couched in terms of what was seemly behavior both in terms of culture and in terms of religion. For my informants their Palestinian heritage and their Islamic faith are perfectly compatible. For my informants, their religion and their Palestinian identity are key parts of their identities. Their gender expectations are influenced by the gender norms and religious expectations, but this does not inherently limit their ability to express themselves through personal agency.

Iftar and suhoor place emphasis on a person's Muslim identity, and not necessarily an

individual's Palestinian identity. However, some key aspects of Palestinian identity are visible during Iftar meals that allow the researcher to see and understand that these individuals are not just Muslims, but they are Palestinians as well. An example of this would be the food served at Iftar meals. A major part of my informants' lives was their religion. I had the opportunity to conduct research during the majority of Ramadan, and was able to experience first hand many traditions, see expectations, and participate in the associated rituals that make up Ramadan. Ramadan is an Islamic holy month where Muslims fast, abstaining from food and drink, from sunrise to sunset. This is done for a full lunar month. Religious scholars based in Saudi Arabia determine the beginning of Ramadan, and announce it globally. Muslims around the world practice this holy ritual. The month of Ramadan is a time to renew one's faith, it is a time for reflection and growth, and Muslims should engage in certain behavior, while encouraging individuals to abstain from bad habits, or give generously to the poor. Many families will decorate their homes with lights, and visit family members and friends during the evening hours. There are many parties, and visiting neighbors is very important. It is a major holiday in the Middle East, and gifts are given to family members as well. Even though fasting is the main point of Ramadan, there is also great feasting in the early mornings and evenings.

The early morning meal, prior to starting the fast is called "suhoor". Usually this is a time for close family living in the same household to gather for an early meal before the first prayers for Fajr[19]. The rule is when you hear the adhan, or call to prayer, that is when you stop eating and drinking. This meal is usually only for close relatives who live in the same household. However, on occasion visitors may come, or more distant relatives who live near by may come for suhoor. It is very rare for people to visit at this time because usually people go to bed late and wake up early for suhoor. However, about mid-way through Ramadan, you will

[19] Fajr is the pre-dawn prayer in Islam.

often find people who skip suhoor because they would rather sleep. I saw this on several occasions. Individuals will wake up enough to drink water, and then go back to sleep without even eating food. However, it is preferred that an individual eat, and often, family members will make the person get up and eat. Suhoor consists of lighter fare than the evening meal. There is always bread that has been warmed on the stovetop, tea, water, jams or preserves, watermelon, and cheese. Sometimes there will be meat, usually tuna or sardines; leftovers from the previous night's meal; cherries; or shamam[20]. Usually someone will have to get up early and prepare this meal. Most often, the women in the family are responsible for getting up, setting up the meal, and waking everyone up to come and eat. This was true of all the households that I visited for suhoor. This meal is always more subdued than Iftar[21] meals.

Iftar meals are held in the evening, and are the ritual breaking of the daily fast during the month of Ramadan. These meals are usually a time of joy and celebration. Frequently friends, neighbors, or family is invited to share an Iftar meal. In the following section, I provide a couple of examples of Iftars that I attended. Um Basim and her daughters hosted the first one. Thamina and Um Basim were in the kitchen cooking and cleaning up as they went. They were cooking chicken and muftool[22] with a hearty and spicy vegetable soup. I watched the young children and kept them out of the way, while Thamina, Um Basim, and Safiya cooked. Hajja Reem and her sister, Hajja Samira, came to eat with us. All told, for the women, it was Safiya, Um Basim, Um Hamza, Thamina, Hala, Hajja Reem, Hajja Samira, and me. After eating, we cleaned everything up and served coffee and juice to our guests, along with fruit. The fruit was ripe plums, pears, and bananas. There were also some sweet poppy seed cookies that we made the day before.

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[20] Shamam is a type of melon common in Jordan, but not common in the United States. It looks like Honeydew, but tastes more like Cantaloupe. It is a very sweet and juicy melon.
[21] Iftar is the ritual breaking of the fast at sunset during Ramadan. It is signaled by the Maghrib (sunset prayer) adhan. Traditionally, it is broken with eating dates and drinking a glass of water before starting the official meal.
[22] Muftool is the Palestinian equivalent to couscous.

After dessert, most of the guests left leaving just Hala, Thamina, and Um Hamza still there. We had pop and talked for a bit. Thamina wanted to go visit her husband's sister, and asked if I would come along, which I did.

For this Iftar meal, men and women ate in separate rooms. Like with weddings, Iftar meals can be gender segregated, but only about one-third of those I attended were. This separation seems to be more due to the amount of people attending rather than any strict rules regarding the separation of men and women. Another informant, Hajja Musheera hosted Iftar one night. This Iftar was also a gender-segregated event. I greeted everyone there the traditional way with the kissing on the cheeks. Hajja Musheera and her family made Uzi, which is rice with carrots and peas, and chicken with sautéed nuts on top. There was Arabic salad, chicken noodle soup, and leban[23]. We broke fast with water and dates, as is tradition at most houses. However, it is only the second time that I have broken fast that way, as all of my other Iftar meals at home have been without dates. However, the other time I ate at Um Hamza's house, there were no dates there either. For the first thirty minutes or so, people ate and drank in silence with only brief talking, asking for food or drink to be passed. The food was good, and so most people did not talk much. After everyone had finished eating, we cleaned everything up. I helped to pick up dishes and the plastic on the floor that they all were sitting on. We sat on cushions surrounding the plastic and food, after the mess had been cleaned up. People took turns washing the dishes and praying. Then everyone headed back to the living room and sat down to talk again.

The food is one of the most important parts of an iftar meal. Often women spend several hours before hand cooking and cleaning. One way that women were able to establish and show their Palestinian identity would be through the foods they cooked. Some examples of traditional

[23] Leban is yogurt.

Palestinian foods include muftool, mulukhiyah[24], kufta[25], and Uzi. Gender is performed by women being the ones responsible for food preparation, serving, and subsequent clean after the meal is finished. Through iftar meals, women perform gender and display their ethnicity through the foods they cook. However, ethnicity can also be shown by how they talk and banter with one another.

This was shown extremely well at Hajja Musheera's iftar gathering. The women at this meal all spoke in a Palestinian dialect, except Hala and Um Basim, both of whom were originally from Syria. The difference between Palestinian and Syrian can be detected by how an individual pronounces certain letters in the Arabic alphabet in a word, or based on the use of a different dialectal term for an item. After the iftar meal concluded, we had some very strong Arabic coffee. There are only four cups, and everyone gets a half cup and then the cup is passed to the next person to share. The talk started as gossip about Um Basim's sister because her sister's husband supports Bashar al-Assad[26], and this had been the cause of an argument between Um Basim and her sister. It was during this conversation that one of the younger women, Kamillah, brought pop to the room. She brought in Pepsi and 7 Up. Um Basim asked, "Is this Pepsi?" (Melendy, 7/22/13). Kamillah replied, "No, it's 7 Up, with black food coloring," (Melendy, 7/22/13). Um Basim did not respond to this remark verbally, but made a face, and took one of the cups containing 7 Up. The women giggled and laughed at the joke for a brief time, and then continued with other conversations. This type of joking was common amongst women. It serves as a way to build connections between women.

[24] Mulukhiyah is chopped jute leaves. They are minced very fine and then boiled with water, olive oil, and made into a slimy soup served with lemon juice and placed on chicken and rice.
[25] Kufta is ground beef or lamb that is spiced and placed in a pan with tomatoes, potatoes, eggplant, and baked in the oven.
[26] Bashar al-Assad is the President of Syria. The country is embroiled in a civil war, and Assad has been accused of many abuses and atrocities that his regime has done.

The conversations drifted to a discussion of religion and politics, which turned into a loud argument. Hajja Musheera made a face at Um Basim, who was the main instigator, and I smiled at her. She turned to me and made the hand gesture for crazy. I giggled a little and nodded. After everyone calmed down, Um Hajar got up and went out to get some dessert--it is baklava cut into triangles and covered in sweet syrup. Um Hajar came back in with a tray full, and Kleenex to hold them. Everyone took one to start. The baklava was extremely sweet tasting and the syrup dripped onto your hands making them sticky, but they were delicious. However, not all iftar meals are elaborately planned and made by the women.

Iftar meals do not have to be made from scratch. Sometimes, if women are busy, or other plans are made, the iftar meal can be purchased from local restaurants. For another Iftar, Um Basim hosted with her family, for their neighbors Um Jabir, her husband and children, and Hala, Hala's husband and daughter. Abu Basim purchased the meal from a restaurant close by. We had kebab, barbeque, grilled meat--mainly chicken and grilled veggies--tomatoes and onions. We drank water and cocktail, which was blended fruits with water and sugar. After the meal, all of the women cleaned everything up. We washed the dishes and then served tea and coffee. This meal was a very laid-back affair. Everyone ate in the same room, unlike with some of the other Iftars which had been gender segregated. The reason for the lack of segregation was because it was not an overly large group of people, and there was sufficient space to have everyone eat together. At some of the other Iftar meals, there had been over fifty people, which made it difficult for everyone to eat in one room. Even though the meal had been purchased, women still did all of the clean up, and the serving of desserts. Therefore, gender was still being performed.

Conclusion:

Palestinian women express themselves through choices they make daily, but their choices are shaped by socio-cultural and religious norms and expectations. All of these categories are interrelated creating an intersectional identity experienced by my informants who understand themselves as Palestinian refugees in Jordan. The gender expectations are shown through choice of dress, resistance, and conformance to gender expectations that are informed by both religion and culture. Religion is an important aspect of my informants' identity, and my ability to experience and participate in Ramadan, a major religious holiday for Muslims, was extremely valuable in understanding Islam through how my informants view it, and how it impacts their lives. It was also beneficial in understanding how the rituals of Ramadan can be gendered by participating and observing events like iftar and suhoor. Ramadan helped to emphasize the cultural expectations, which help in reinforcing the Palestinian community through visitation and expected hospitality. Visitation and hospitality are important to help reinforce Palestinian community. As Benedict Anderson (2006) asserted that the nation is imagined, visitation and hospitality actually serve to provide tangible community that Palestinian refugees can connect, utilize, and shape through their interaction with other Palestinian refugees.

I show the ways in which Palestinians can express their Palestinian identity, and how gender can help to create a sense of community with other Palestinian women. The first is how people are dressed. As discussed earlier, there are some differences particularly between generations. Hajja Musheera, Hajja Reem, and Hajja Samira all wore traditional Palestinian dresses to each Iftar that I saw them. This is one way that these women can show that they are Palestinian. Many times, the food served at Iftars, and occasionally suhoor, is traditional Palestinian food. Uzi is a traditional Palestinian food that I ate at several Iftars that I attended.

However, traditional food was not always served, as I explained in one instance, Abu Basim went to a local restaurant to purchase the entire meal. At all the Iftars I attended, women were the ones responsible for preparing, setting up, putting away, and cleaning up after Iftar. While this is not necessarily limited to Palestinians, it does show expected and adhered to gender expectations that are present in Palestinian society. However, the gossip that was present at most Iftar gatherings shows that women do not always follow social expectations. The way that women talk with one another, the use of Palestinian dialect, and gossip of local neighbors, friends, and family, are examples of women breaking an expectation that prohibits gossip. These previous examples show that my informants, who identify as Palestinian women, hold many other identities that shape their personal views and expressions, like their identity as Muslim women and their positions within families--mothers, sisters, daughters, and so forth. This gives us a much more complete picture to examine, and reveals the complexity of being a Palestinian refugee in Jordan. Culture, religion, and gender, all serve to influence my informants' lives, in addition to their living as refugees in Jordan. It is necessary to understand that all of these separate categories shape and inform how my informants' view themselves as Palestinian women and refugees.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

During my research, I found that the Palestinian women I interviewed expressed their Palestinian identity in different ways, through various mechanisms that are open to them, such as self-identification, dress, and rituals, just to name a few. These women used the collective narrative as a way to evoke imagery of a nation of Palestine, and yet personalize it with their own stories, or the stories of their family, expounding upon the right to return to a "Free Palestine". My informants held a deep sense of nationalism that is embodied in the collective narrative, and they are able to express that sense of nationalism through their personal stories they shared. Additionally, these women face explicit and tacit gender expectations placed upon them from their culture and their religion. Many of my informants embrace these expectations, and use them as a way to express their Palestinian identity.

For my informants living as Palestinian refugees in Jordan, their daily lives are shaped by many external forces, such as their religion, culture, and nationalism, which prescribe certain expectations and obligations upon their gender. These forces do not prevent them from expressing themselves as Palestinian women, and in some cases aids them in their claim to a Palestinian national identity. For my research, it is the community of Palestinians that has been established residing within the city of Zarqa, and the continuing connections that are built and expanded upon through many of these women's actions. As Anderson (2006) says, "it is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship," (7). In the case for my informants, this comradery is important to help reconstruct a Palestinian community in Jordan. Even though all of my informants held Jordanian citizenship, they all felt more connected to their Palestinian nationality. While some of my informants had originally come

from various parts of Palestine, some of them were born and raised abroad. However, even those that were born and raised in other countries felt a deep connection to their families' homeland. For my informants born abroad, they were enculturated and actively taught the history, historical narratives, and their parents educated them about their personal connections to Palestine. Palestinian identity is expressed in a variety ways, but can be seen in marriage rituals, particularly the inclusion of dabke, and the use of decorated swords to cut the wedding cake. However, weddings additionally raise more questions than they answer due to their globalized nature, and call into question what is a Palestinian wedding. It is important to note, that weddings amongst Palestinians needs further research to understand their complex nature, and what I focused on was the aspects of the weddings that convey Palestinian identity. There are many ways for women to express their Palestinian identity; another way to connect to the Palestinian national identity is through engaging with the collective narrative.

Within the collective narrative Palestine is the homeland that individuals relate to through powerful imagery and an idealized view of life in Palestine prior to division and occupation. The collective narrative is the stories that my informants shared, with many stories focusing upon the loss of their homeland, but also engaging themes of dislocation, suffering, return, and the idealized imagery of Palestine. The language used to describe Palestine evokes deep connections with Palestinian refugees, and serves as a way to verbalize the connections that my informants feel to their historical homeland. About only half of my informants had lived previously in Palestine, the other half were born and raised in other countries. Even individuals, who had never been or lived in Palestine, make statements regularly referring to the beauty of Palestine. These people use the collective narrative to connect themselves to Palestine in lieu of a documentable, or physical tie to Palestine. The collective narrative helps to build connections

with other Palestinian refugees, as well. This helps to reinforce a sense of community amongst Palestinian refugees. My informants focus on emphasizing their or their family's home in historical Palestine, in order to support their claims of belonging to Palestine. Even informants who have never been to Palestine could relate stories about where their parents and grandparents came from in historical Palestine, and knew extensive information about the region they came from. These women were able to elaborate on their familial ties to a specific area in Palestine, which supported their self-identification of Palestinian identity.

The majority of the women I interviewed stated their strong desire to return to Palestine. The "right to return" is central to the Palestinian collective narrative, and to Palestinian identity. The reasoning behind the argument for Palestinians to return varies depending upon the informant, but all maintain that Palestinians who wish to return should be allowed to do so. The stories focus on the loss, suffering, injustice, and pain that many Palestinians have experienced by being forced out of their homeland, and to live as refugees in other countries. These stories serve to promote shared suffering, and help to develop a sense of community and comradery amongst Palestinian refugees. This sense of community bridges distance, generations, and gender to unite Palestinian refugees into one collective group that shares a historical homeland and history.

The way women experience being a Palestinian refugee is affected by the historical, geographical, and political context; for example, Palestinian women living in Lebanon have different experiences, rights, and problems than Palestinian women living in Jordan. However, there are many unifying factors that unite Palestinian women. For my informants, their gender was an important aspect of their identity, and shapes how they interact with the collective narrative, and how they express their Palestinian identity. For Palestinian women refugees have

many external forces that impact their daily lives and the ways that they express themselves. These forces are influenced by religion and socio-cultural norms. The majority religion in Jordan is Islam, and all of my informants were Muslims. All of my informants participated in religious rituals, like Ramadan. During Ramadan, women not only adhere to religious expectations, but also feel pressure to conform to other gender constructs, like food preparation, hospitality, and dress. There are specific foods that are associated with Palestinian identity like mulukhiyah, uzi, and kufta. Many of these dishes are prepared during Ramadan meals. These help to assert that certain dishes are Palestinian and associated with religious rituals. Hospitality is important to many Palestinian refugees because it serves the purpose of creating a community, when living as refugees in a different country. Visiting neighbors helps to build local bonds and connections that can be strengthened and utilized to help preserve Palestinian identity in a specific area outside of Palestine. Dress is unique because while clothing styles change over time, which can be seen in the difference generations and what they wear. While religion plays a role here as well, it is important to note that religion and Palestinian identity are not exclusionary in nature. Both are part of my informants' identity, and all of them readily embrace both their faith and Palestinian national identity. The socio-cultural and religious constructs that impact Palestinian refugee women need to be understood in order to fully see the complexity that these women embody.

The question remains, how are all of these inter-related? Due to the strong impacts of gender, religion, and other cultural norms that inform Palestinian women's lives, these facets inherently inter-connect with how Palestinian women identify and display their Palestinian identity. Gender norms affect how women perceive themselves within their own culture. These norms can be socially enforced, like social facts (Durkheim 1895). Women face outside pressure

from peers, family, and strangers to conform to these norms. When women resist gender norms, they can face harsh criticism and punishment through mechanisms like gossiping, staring, or verbal chastisements. Thus gender impacts how women express themselves, and how they express their Palestinian identity through things like cooking specific foods, wearing specific clothing, or speaking a Palestinian dialect. The things that women engage with tend to be unconscious choices, but sometimes they are deliberate, as how they engage with the collective narrative.

One way that women can express their Palestinian identity, and claim ties to Palestinian national identity is through the use of the Palestinian collective narrative. Palestinian identity is the things that women do to show that they are Palestinian, both unconscious and conscious decisions. The Palestinian national identity is situated around an independent Palestine, or the desire for it. Palestinian national identity focuses on rejecting colonialism, predominantly from the West (Khalidi, 1991). These ideals are typically found in the collective narrative. Additionally, the collective narrative serves as a means of education to children and enculturating them into Palestinian national identity and Palestinian culture. This was shown by the formal and informal education of children both in school and at home. Women engage with the collective narrative at differing levels. Women who have actively lived in and fled from Palestine engage through telling their stories of loss, suffering, dispossession, and dislocation. Women, who have never been to Palestine, utilize familial stories to connect with the collective narrative. This is supported by Holt's research, which states that, "understandings of identity, which spring from 'personal history' and 'social location' and are linked to 'social processes' and 'cultural narratives'." (Holt 2007: 247). The collective narrative is sometimes used to define and construct an ideal Palestine, and within that narrative constructs emotions of how Palestinians

should feel, or what they have experienced. This helps to create and reinforce norms, which are then projected on to Palestinian national identity, which women actively engage with. My informants engage these norms through displaying their Palestinian identity by the clothing they choose to wear, the food they cook, and the way they participate in traditions.

My research focuses on the interconnections that exist between gender, the Palestinian collective narrative, and the Palestinian national identity. I have done this by examining how women participate in the how they then express their own Palestinian identity, Palestinian collective narrative, and how they attempt to connect that to the Palestinian national identity. However, cultures are not static, and are constantly changing. This came out in my research through the changing traditions associated with weddings, music, and personal feelings about gender expectations in Palestinian society. More research needs to be dedicated to understanding how globalization is impacting Palestinians, and in particular Palestinian refugee women. Future research could be dedicated to showing the impacts of globalization through changing wedding traditions and rituals, with a focus on how women are engaged in these traditions and rituals. More research should be conducted focusing on women's role in Palestinian culture, especially in Jordan where there has been a lack of research completed. However, it is clear that women do have an impact on Palestinian national identity through the ways they connect with the collective narrative and communicate their Palestinian identity.

APPENDIX

Alias	Age	Occupation	Date Interviewed	Born in Palestine	Born Where	Year Fled from Palestine	Education Level	Huweya
Um Faisel	Mid 50's	Housewife	7/28/2013	Yes	West Bank	1968	Some college	No
Um Basim	Late 40's	Housewife	7/28/2013	No	Syria	NA	Finished high school	No
Um Najah	Early 50's	Housewife	7/28/2013	Yes	Gaza	1967	Finished high school	No
Safiya	20	College Student	7/24/2013	No	Jordan	NA	Some college	Yes
Um Adil	Late 30's/Early 40's	Teacher	7/23/2013	Yes	Gaza	First Intifada	BA	No
Yasmeen	26	Unmarried	7/15/2013	No	Kuwait	NA	BA	No
Isaf	23	College Student	7/13/2013	No	Jordan	NA	BA	No
Um Ackmed	Early 40's	Housewife	7/13/2013	Yes	Gaza	First Intifada	Some college	No
Hazar	27	College Student	7/7/2013	No	Jordan	NA	MA	No
Um Khadar	Mid 40's	Housewife	7/7/2013	Yes	West Bank	First Intifada	Some college	No
Cantara	22	College Student	7/3/2013	No	Jordan	NA	Some college	No
Hessa	18	College Student	7/3/2013	No	Jordan	NA	Some college	No
Suha	19	College Student	7/3/2013	No	Kuwait	NA	Some college	No
Um Naser	Mid 30's	Housewife	6/10/2013	No	Jordan	NA	Finished high school	No
Hajja Ahlam	Mid/Late 60's	Housewife	6/10/2013	Yes	Gaza	1968/1969	Didn't finish high school	No
Hajja Besma	Mid/Late 60's	Retired teacher	6/10/2013	Yes	Gaza	1968	Didn't finish high school	No
Hajja Zeina	Mid/Late 60's	Retired farmer	6/10/2013	Yes	Gaza	1968	Didn't finish high school	No
Um Zeid	Mid/Late 50's	Retired Secretary	6/10/2013	Yes	West Bank	1969	Some college	No
Hajja Musheera	Mid 50's	Housewife	6/10/2013	Yes	Gaza	1969	Finished high school	No
Hajja Fanan	81	Retired	6/10/2013	Yes	Haifa	1948	Didn't finish high school	No
Hajja Reem	Mid 50's	Housewife	6/5/2013	Yes	West Bank	1968	Finished highschool	No

Um Haitham	Mid 30's	Housewife	6/5/2013	No	Jordan	NA		Finished high school	No
Um Hadi	Late 40's	Housewife	6/5/2013	Yes	West Bank		1968	Finished high school	No
Hajja Najmah	Early 60's	Housewife	6/5/2013	Yes	Gaza		1968	Finished high school	No
Hajja Nasrin	Mid 60's	Housewife	6/5/2013	Yes	Gaza		1968	Finished high school	No
Um Osama	Mid 30's	Secretary	6/3/2013	No	Jordan	NA		BA	No
Hajja Hadia	Late 60's	Housewife	6/3/2013	Yes	West Bank		1968	Didn't finish high school	No
Hajja Yasira	Late 60's/Early 70's	Housewife	6/3/2013	Yes	West Bank		1947	Didn't finish high school	No
Um Ahed	Late 30's/Early 40's	Teacher	5/29/2013	Yes	West Bank	First Intifada		BA	No
Um Mohammed	Late 60's	Housewife	5/29/2013	Yes	Gaza		1967	Didn't finish high school	Yes
Um Ahmed	Late 60's	Housewife	5/27/2013	Yes			1967	Didn't finish high school	No

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